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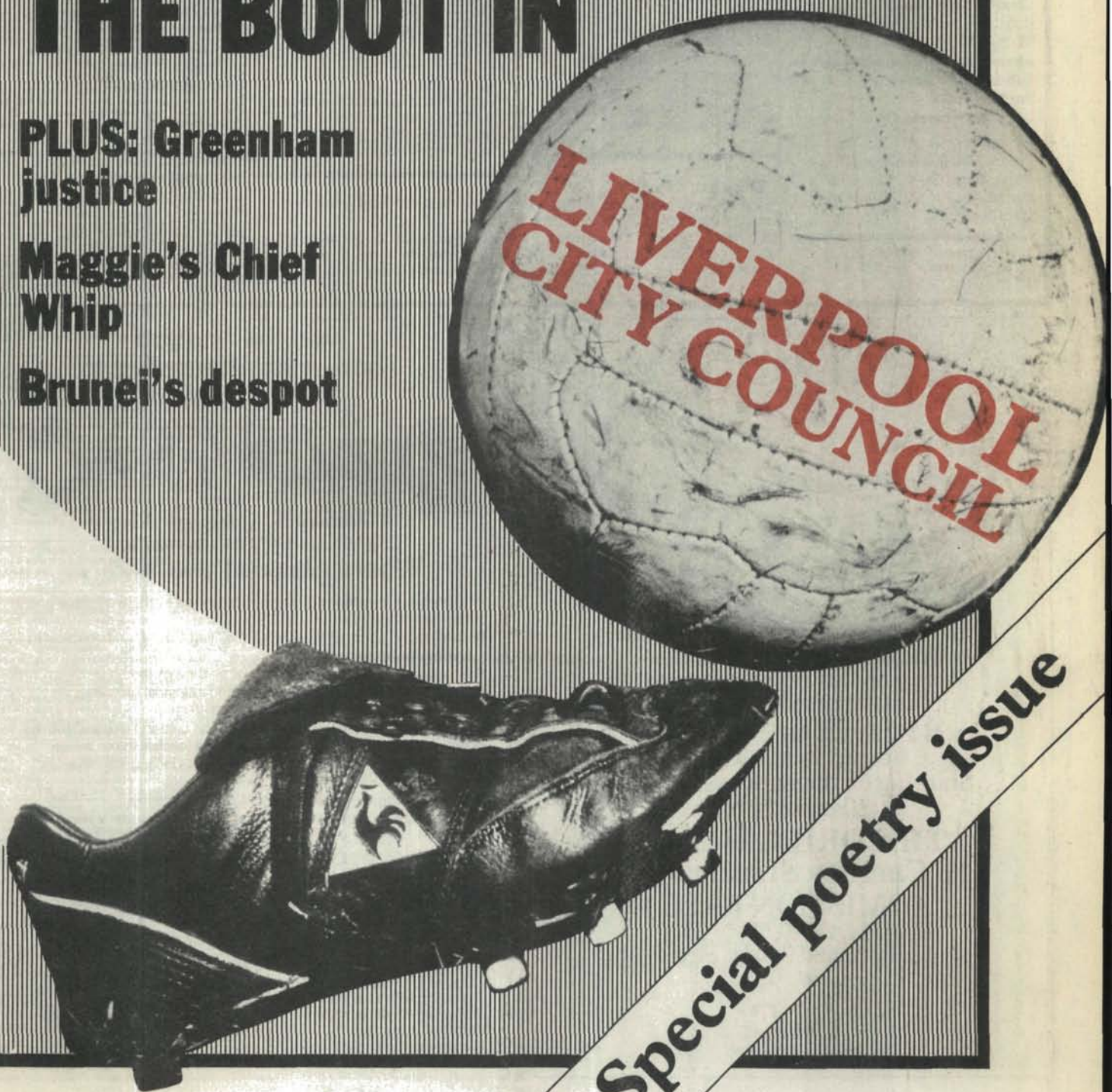
New Statesman

PUTTING THE BOOT IN

PLUS: Greenham justice

Maggie's Chief Whip

Brunei's despot



Special poetry issue

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New Statesman

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Liverpool docked
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Thatcher's 2nd XI
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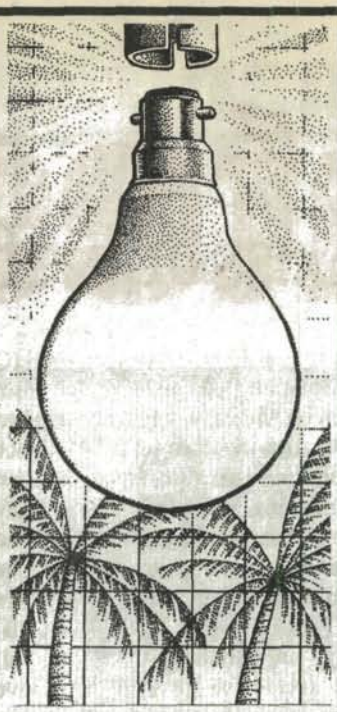

Uneasy dreams of the tropics
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New Statesman Vol 107 No 2763 2 March 1984

Lessons after GCHQ

MRS THATCHER has made a fool of herself over the GCHQ affair. That is about the only consolation that can be drawn from it. Denis Healey was on good form on Monday, when he weighed into her in the House of Commons. But the most telling evidence that she had blundered came from her own side. Even her own front bench colleagues were smirking and deriving scarcely concealed, boyish enjoyment from those Healey phrases — 'she who must be obeyed', 'Catherine the Great of Finchley' and 'the great she-elephant'. The deep unhappiness of her backbenchers was expressed in a letter to *The Times* from Sir Kenneth Lewis, MP for Stamford and Spurling, on Monday — '. . . to tell individuals (at GCHQ), whom successive governments have encouraged to join trade unions, that they cannot be union members, even when they accept that such membership will have no negotiating clout, is not only absurd but is also disturbingly restrictive on the very freedoms GCHQ is there to preserve'.

GCHQ employees have understandably been concerned for their jobs, as well as being in varying degrees outraged at the dictatorial way in which they have been treated. So it was decided that those who signed the renunciation of their rights to union membership — as the government was demanding — would lodge the bits of paper with the unions, pending the outcome of negotiations. Thus at least the government would be kept guessing about the extent of opposition it might in the end have to face at GCHQ.

If the unions were able to negotiate something successfully, then the papers could be returned and destroyed. If not, their jobs were not at risk. Meanwhile, what everyone took to be negotiations in good faith with the government were continuing. In effect the unions conceded everything of substance that the government wanted. Mrs Thatcher was expected to give way only on what had in effect become the symbolic issue of actual union membership.

It is now clear that someone leaked to the government the fact that between two thirds and three quarters of the GCHQ staff had signed and handed in renunciation papers. This seems to have been the main reason why the Prime Minister decided to back away from the compromise formula that was being patiently worked out between the trade unions and the Cabinet Office. Armed with that piece of inside information, she decided that the political risks involved in 'toughing it out' in order to save 100 per cent of her political face over the whole affair were worth taking. This last minute reversal of the trend of the negotiations lay behind the spontaneous, if rather uncharacteristic, outburst of indignation on the part of Len Murray and other TUC leaders, when the Prime Minister reverted at their final meeting to a position of complete intransigence.

In this instance, the trade unions involved and the TUC have clearly won the argument, even if the government continues to use its coercive power to reject the logic. But winning one argument is nothing by itself. There is distressingly little recognition on the Left and in the union movement of the fact that Thatcherite union bashing still evokes a positive political response for the Tories — or analysis of why this should now be the case. By history and tradition trade unions have been deeply democratic institutions, responsive to the interests and anxieties of their members, defending them against the hostile tendencies of our political and economic system.

The question must be asked: how was it that this movement got itself by 1979 into a position where the promise of a fundamental assault on its rights and liberties won substantial votes for the Tories — even from trade union members? And how is it that trade unionism in this country since 1979 has suffered defeat after successive defeat at the hands of a Tory government — the last GCHQ — without there being any sense of support rallying to it as an essential part of the democratic process.

THE ANSWER can only be that important parts of the activity of the trade union movement no longer seems politically essential, even to its own members. Of course, a prolonged recession and disgraceful levels of unemployment weaken the position of trade unions in their main function — bargaining over wages and conditions of employment. But the malaise goes much deeper than that — and runs through every level of the movement.

Starting with the national leadership, with few exceptions the general council of the TUC is not comprised of people who convey to their members (still less to the world in general) an impression of high moral or sustained political purpose. Whether fair or not, the internal politics of the union movement succeed in presenting themselves far too often as being about protecting personal and vested interests — and not about working for a better society, or even a better deal for trade union members. The public gets — and can be forgiven for getting — the impression that serried ranks of senior union officials, once elected, have and expect to hold a meal ticket for the rest of their working life.

This negative impression will not change until the trade union movement is once again seen to be the standard bearer over issues of genuine concern to working people in the 1980s. It has so far failed to adjust to huge changes in the nature of the workforce and to its changed concerns — particularly to the changes centred on women and the low paid.

The danger, though, is that the TUC leadership will continue to divert attention in the direction of union participation at the top table of the corporate state. In retrospect, the way in which the Labour governments of 1964-70 and 1974-79 drew individual senior trade unionists into the system of government was a disaster for the movement. The illusion was held out that trade union advance would come by being in the confidence of government. Advance will in fact only come again by regaining the confidence of people in the workplace and fighting their battles. □

If you live in Manchester, Liverpool or Leeds. . .

The *New Statesman* is now on sale in the main city centre shops (station bookstalls, John Menzies, W. H. Smith, etc) in **MANCHESTER, LIVERPOOL** and **LEEDS** from **THURSDAY** mid-morning onwards. The *NS* has been available in London on Thursdays for many years and if this experiment is a success we hope to increase the number of towns where we can offer this earlier distribution.

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Security snoopers set up computer network

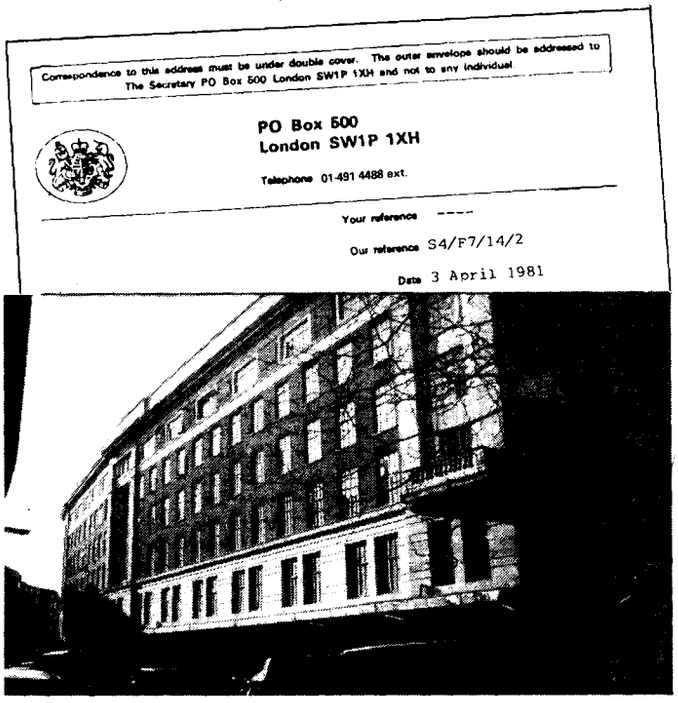
A NATIONAL network of computers and access terminals has been set up in secret by MI5, the security service. The creation of a national political intelligence network suggests either that MI5 is setting up a system of regional surveillance offices or that Special Branch teams in each police force will carry out his task for them using the terminals and small computers.

The new network involves at least 200 access terminals and many smaller 'mini' computers each linked to MI5's central installation in Mayfair. According to a computer staff agency used by MI5 the network already includes 'piles of minis' and a 'nationwide' distribution of access terminals. The minicomputers could also be connected to larger 'host' government computers enabling the central MI5 computer to tap into personal records held by other departments. Regulation of the MI5 computer is specifically excluded from the Data Protection Bill now going through Parliament.

The government has consistently refused to give Parliament any information about the huge MI5 computer installed in Mayfair since its existence was first revealed by the *New Statesman* two years ago (*NS* 5 March 1982). However, details of the network which MI5 has been planning since at least 1977 have emerged from a series of advertisements which MI5 have been placing for computer staff. Over 60 have appeared in the last seven years and have been monitored in a joint investigation by *New Scientist* and *New Statesman*.

The advertisements, which have been placed by two staff recruiting agencies used by MI5, specify that the computer concerned is a 'large ICL 2980 configuration' in the Mayfair London W1 area. There is only one such computer installation, and it is in the MI5 headquarters in Curzon Street and Mount Row, Mayfair. The computer is the most powerful type made by ICL. Prospective applicants who then phone EDP Systems Ltd, one of the two recruitment agencies, are told that the jobs advertised are with the 'Ministry of Defence'. Both EDP Systems and James Baker Associates, the second agency, pass suitable applicants on to MI5 administrative staff for interview. Two senior members of the employment agencies have also confirmed privately that the advertisements were placed on behalf of MI5.

The current series of adverts began in April 1977, shortly before MI5 took delivery of its large new (dual) 2980 computer. The unidentified employer, said the ads, was then 'developing large-scale, sophisticated information systems using major ICL 1900 and 2900 computers'. In December 1977, computer programmers who came to work for MI5 were promised 'sound prospects in a growth situation' and also 'creative analysis work at one of the most advanced installations in London. . . our clients have a considerable volume of new projects on hand'.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Date 3 April 1981

Inside box: advertisements for MI5's Mayfair computer centre; below: the MI5 HQ at Curzon Street Mayfair and how the Security Service writes to successful applicants for its computer centre, disguising itself as 'Box 500, London SW1'.

The advertisements suggest that MI5 has recruited between 60 and 100 computer professionals to develop the computer centre and related network. The most recent advert, which appeared three weeks ago in *Computing*, offered computer systems analysts salaries of up to £11,000.

When we enquired at the offices of EDP Systems Ltd last week, a woman employee at first told us that the job advertised three weeks ago was with the Ministry of Defence and that many people might be unwilling to take a job at 'this kind of site.' (Absolute, compartmentalised secrecy is demanded of employees.) Anyone being considered for a job had to wait a minimum of three months while they were 'positively vetted'. We then disclosed we were journalists and asked if she admitted that the company was recruiting staff for the MI5 computer. 'I haven't got a clue. I'm not denying anything', she said.

EDP's advertisements also make repeated references to the 'on-line mini-computer systems' network linked to the main MI5 computer. These references appear to confirm previously published information from ICL sources that MI5 wants to develop a national communications network linking several large government computers.

In February 1978 one advert specified that mini-computer specialists would have to give 'presentations to user departments'. During 1979 a special programming group was set up in MI5's administrative offices at Great Marlborough Street (now vacated). At least one of the mini-computer sites connected to MI5 can be identified from EDP's advertisements. It is located near Waterloo station, presumably at the offices there of the Secret Intelligence Service, SIS.

Apart from giving technical details, the advertisements also confirm MI5's independence from normal civil service scrutiny. Normally the recruitment of government computer staff is controlled by the Civil Service Commission. Not only are MI5's staff recruited directly, but the suspicions of one applicant were raised when he was told that although working for the civil service he could get higher pay than standard rates.

Labour front bench spokesman Michael Meacher has this week tabled three questions for the Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Heseltine, asking him — as the MI5 computer is being passed off as belonging to the MoD — to explain the purpose of the national computer network which has been linked to the Mayfair computer centre. Apart from exempting MI5 from proposed legal safeguards, the Protection Bill also includes a clause giving MI5 the right to tap any other personal computer bank. Ministers can certify that the personal information is being transferred to the secret MI5 computer in order to 'safeguard national security'. This decision cannot be challenged — nor will anyone have the right to know if such a transaction has taken place. All this dovetails with the plan, revealed earlier this year, to issue everyone with a 'Numbercard' containing every person's National Insurance number. MI5 has long used the NI number to identify persons.

Duncan Campbell with Steve Connor

Steve Connor works for New Scientist.

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New company against the unions

OFFICIALS of the National Union of Journalists meet this Friday to consider how the union will support its ten members on strike at Dimbleby newspapers in the wake of the judgment from the law lords.

Earlier this week the union was expecting the House of Lords to find for Dimbleby — the court only heard the NUJ and did not call the other side — granting him an injunction against the NUJ.

Journalists employed by Dimbleby had walked out after being told the printing of their papers, the *Richmond and Twickenham Times* and three sister papers, was being switched to TBF Printers. It is a non-union company, and an associate company of the notoriously anti-union T. Bailey Forman, with which the NUJ has been in dispute for five years because it sacked 28 journalists from the *Nottingham Evening Post*.

The two companies are owned by Forman Hardy Holdings Ltd, the shareholders are the same and they share the same address and telephone number. Judges can, if they choose, go behind the corporate identity of a company and rule that though they may be legally separate, they are an economic entity. The process, known as lifting the corporate veil, has been ordered by judges in a range of cases — the most common where company fraud or tax evasion is suspected.

According to the standard work, *The Principles of Company Law* by L.C.B. Gower, it is impossible to predict in what cases judges will choose to look at the reality of whether companies are indeed independent and separate. 'The attitude of the courts is ambivalent, essentially haphazard and irrational,' he says.

The refusal to look at the reality of the ownership of TBF printers and T. Bailey Forman opens up a legal loophope for employers seeking to avoid the impact of industrial disputes.

Geraldine Hackett

Trident upstaging cruise

THE TEN billion pound Trident programme is likely to move to the centre of anti-nuclear campaigning this year. About 1,000 people turned up in Manchester last weekend for the first British convention of the Anti-Trident campaign, up till now a Scottish campaign based in Glasgow.

Pressure from activists in Barrow, where much of Trident is to be built, has caused CND to consider seriously a plan for this October's major demonstration to be a linking of arms between Barrow and Sellafield (Windscale, where plutonium for warheads is separated). Whatever the final details, there is a clear intention to shift the emphasis from cruise to Trident, both because the cruise campaign is dominated by the independent Greenham women and because Trident is not yet in Britain.

The Anti-Trident Campaign is hoping to pick up as wide support nationally as possible. Speakers included John Johnston, a member of the Tory party representing Tories Against Cruise and Trident (who was very warmly received), Isobel Lindsay from the Scottish National Party and Albert Booth from the Labour Party. Expected speakers Jim Wallace, Liberal LP for Orkney and Shetland — and Tom McNally of the Social Democrats were respectively fog-bound and ill.

In agreeing a resolution to establish a UK-wide anti-Trident campaign, the conference overwhelming rejected a move by Neil McKechnie of Scottish CND to promote CND's role in the campaign. Anxiety about building a broad coalition also emerged in the proposal to hold a mass demonstration to coincide with Reagan's visit in June. Although it was passed there was a rather bitter debate in which a couple of delegates warned that the conference was being 'manipulated' to become anti-American.

The usual delight of the KGB in such events was marred by the two representatives of Soviet television (the only TV crew present) who spent most of the time in heated and noisy argument quarrelling about what and how to film.

Rob Edwards

MISCELLANY

Putting your Foot in it

Beneath the public face of Labour's Chesterfield campaign lurk deep tensions. Monica Foot, Labour's official press officer for the campaign, has been more than a little put out by Tony Benn's reliance on his own unofficial press aide, Nita Clarke, who normally works for Ken Livingstone in London. Into this cauldron steps *Mirror*man Matthew Coady, who moonlights as a writer of thrillers. His current plan is to write a murder novel set in a by-election. While in Chesterfield he sought Ms Foot's help in getting the detail right. 'On three conditions', Monica replied. 'First, the victim is the candidate. Second, the culprit is the press officer. Third, she gets away with it.'

Anonymous criticism

Beware of criticising the comrades on the Labour-controlled Nottingham County Council. They were so incensed at a recent article in *Citywise* attacking excessive gun training for the local police force that a private detective was enlisted to root out the authors. Unfortunately, the ex-policeman chosen for the task was no Shoestring and inadvertently blurted out to the paper's printers, inexplicably his first port of call, that he had been sent by the Council. Dismayed, the printers called the police and the man was sent packing. The Deputy Chief Executive of the Council, Michael Suter, told us: 'We don't mind being criticised, but we don't like it being anonymous.'

Boudoir Budberg

Details of H.G. Wells's sex life in the extracts from the biography by his illegitimate son Anthony West (published in the *Observer*) contain evidence of a major British security scandal. One of Wells's mistresses was the Baroness Moura Budberg. She had been a favourite at the court of Czar Nicholas II, well known to Rasputin, a friend of Kerensky, the mistress of Maxim Gorky — and also, rather surprisingly, *persona grata* at the court of J. Stalin. West reveals that she was able to prosper thus because she was for decades a Russian spy. And the British angle? After Wells died, Moura worked for British film mogul Alexander Korda as a 'fixer' and high-class social secretary. Korda was knighted in 1943, on the recommendation of his friend Winston Churchill, despite widespread criticism of the fact that Korda was spending so much of the war in Hollywood. What was not known was that Korda received his knighthood largely because he had allowed his film company to be used as a front for a substantial British intelligence operation in Los Angeles and New York. But all the time Korda's right-hand woman was a Soviet agent. Spying must have been much more fun in those days.

God only knows

Why are there never any revelations in the *Daily Telegraph*? Since you ask, we can reveal all. Sub-editors (those are the people who go through what journalists write crossing out all the interesting bits) at the paper have recently been sternly reminded in a memo from the chief sub-editor that 'only God reveals; the *Daily Telegraph* discloses'.

Riot gear in prisons

PRISON officers have been issued with new riot gear of green overalls, and yellow plastic helmets with visors, for use in the tactic of breaking up increasingly frequent protests by prisoners. As prison regimes tighten up, especially in punishment blocks, following the withdrawal of parole for certain categories of prisoner, protests by prisoners are spreading.

In Wormwood Scrubs, according to information from PROP, a protest began on 7 January. A group of prison officers dressed in the new riot gear 'charged into a number of prisoners in the segregation block'. A number of prisoners were then charged with assault. Six prisoners began a 'dirty protest' — they refusal to 'slop out' — and two of them, Jimmy Rodrigues and John Garcia were still on the protest on 20 February.

A third protester, Mickey Waite, was, say other prisoners, assaulted and put in the strong box cell, a tiny unfurnished cell rarely used for more than 36 hours at a time. Mickey Waite is believed to still be in the strong box after some two weeks. Prison officers are said to be wearing protective masks against the 'stink of piss and shit.' The Home Office admitted that a dirty protest is taking place but claims to be ignorant of any reason for it.

Trouble emerged in Gartree, Leicester, in late January and early February. The cause here concerns medical treatment. According to prisoners the new prison doctor, Doctor Hall, is attempting to reduce the use of drugs but is being resisted by prison officers. Prisoners have demonstrated about the treatment of one 'lifer' who had shown his suspicion that a sleeping draught provided by a medical officer might be too strong. He was taken from his cell to the punishment block in the middle of the night by prison officers and, after the protest, brought back with a black eye and bruised ribs. Prisoners refused to return to their cells until they got assurances that he would not be assaulted again. Following this, several prisoners were transferred into solitary confinement in local prisons.

In Walton prison, Liverpool, Brian Elton ended a five week hunger strike against visiting conditions last week. Elton, a Category A prisoner, has partial hearing in only one ear. Walton insists on closed visits where the visitor is separated by thick wired glass. Elton cannot hear anything through it. His wife says he ended the strike on promise of a transfer.

In Durham, eight women are on hunger strike demanding the closure of the top-security H wing where the small number of women are kept confined in cramped conditions surrounded by hundreds of men.

Terry O'Halloran

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Report on video nasties 'frankly absurd'

NEXT WEDNESDAY, the Parliamentary Video Enquiry Group will publish its major report on videos and children. But, according to an investigation by Bristol Polytechnic lecturer Martin Barker into the Group's Interim Report issued last November to a blaze of media publicity, 'we cannot place the slightest credence in their research'.

Barker considers this work 'frankly absurd academically' and 'explicitly partisan towards a festival-of-light type of view'. Yet the report had had considerable impact, helping the Video Recordings Bill through Parliament. The final report is being released as the Bill moves to the Lords where tougher right-wing amendments are expected.

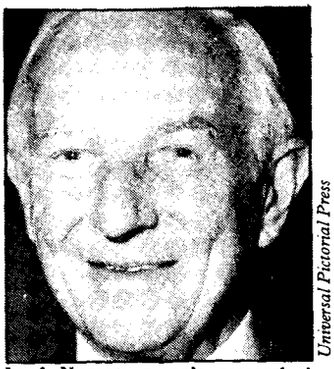
Despite its name, the Group in fact has no official status. It was set up last June as an ad hoc coalition of individuals and mainly Christian organisations to sponsor empirical research into children's viewing habits. Prominent were right-wingers like Lord Nugent, the Group's Chairman, Lord Swinfen, Chairman of the Group's research working party, Raymond Johnstone, of CARE Campaigns — which replaced the Festival of Light last year — and Clifford Hill, a congregational minister and ex-LSE lecturer. Liberal thinkers included Nicholas Coote and Brian Brown from the Catholic and Methodist Churches. Both these churches have now withdrawn.

The Working Party commissioned Brown to do the research from a national sample of schools, under Hill's direction, at Oxford Polytechnic where Brown teaches. They rejected an alternative proposal from Hill to use mainly police information from authorities like Manchester known for their morally authoritarian policing. And they didn't approve a paper by Johnstone for a shorter study which would make 'immediate action inescapable'.

But last November before the Oxford data had been completed and analysed, Hill and Swinfen issued the Interim Report and dismissed the Oxford team. This report Barker says bears no relationship to the Oxford research and has a striking resemblance to Hill's original proposal and Johnstone's paper.

Barker claims that two statistics cited in the report which were prominent in the media coverage that 40 per cent of all children and 37 per cent of 5-6 year olds watched video nasties 'have no scientific basis, they look as if they're based on the Oxford figures but they're not'. The Oxford researchers have disassociated themselves from the report.

Hill now admits that the interim report was 'rather scanty', but states the 40 per cent figure is 'completely accurate', borne out by new research. Hill said that the Oxford Team had been dismissed for 'academic and ethical reasons'. They had got a 'too high refusal rate' from schools and the questionnaires had not been properly numbered to control for social class. He also said that Brown had offered to sell the data gathered to a trade organisation, the British Videogram Association. In fact Brown did not make such an offer, but to do subsequent market research for them.



Universal Pictorial Press

Lord Nugent: group's research is worthless

Barker, who had no previous contact with Brown's team and investigated with 'no preconceptions' disputes this account. He argues that the refusal rate of 10 per cent was to be expected in a contentious subject and that it was Hill's suggestion that the original questionnaires were not numbered.

David Berry

Bike bag secrets

SPECIAL BRANCH police officers last week gave Duncan Campbell back all but one of the 41 documents they took from his home, during a six-and-a-half-hour long search which followed his bicycle accident. They have retained just one document — the now-famous Army manual on Personal Protection and Decontamination, which gives instructions on defecating in the Arctic.

Scotland Yard say that a report on the finding of the manual has been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who is expected to reach an early decision. The Special Branch have also kept three items which were found after they removed and opened Campbell's bike bags after the accident three weeks ago. These are an architect's plan of a new RAF bunker at Bentley Priory, Middlesex; some letters between the Home Office and the Property Services Agency about the Immigrant Detention Unit at Harmondsworth, Middlesex; and a copy of a civil defence planning document, provided to Campbell officially by the GLC.

All but the civil defence document have been mentioned in *New Statesman* articles — published between 1979 and last month. The civil defence document, although marked 'Restricted', was not only officially in his possession, but is in any case 15 years old, has become out of date and has been declassified.

The police have now admitted copying all the papers he was carrying in his bicycle bags. Previously, they had only admitted copying his address book.

Duncan Campbell is preparing legal action against the police for unlawful trespass by removing, searching, and seizing goods from his bicycle. ■

Knapp's right hand

LEFT-WING Jimmy Knapp, General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, may soon have a right-wing President to share the leadership of the union with him. Just before Christmas the president-elect Bob Kettle died and George Wakenshaw, who was Kettle's runner-up, is leading the nominations to replace him. Wakenshaw who has the support of 74 branches, is reckoned to be a right-winger, as is another leading contender, Jack Davies, who gained 40 nominations. In third place is Charlie Devine with 32 nominations. Devine is said to have the tacit support of Jimmy Knapp.

The president, who normally holds office for two years, is traditionally elected by the 77 delegates at the Annual General Meeting. However, because Kettle died before he took office, and because of the cost of organising AGMs, the 1983 delegates are to vote by post. Although branches decide which candidate they support, the delegate, who represents several branches, is not mandated. Votes have to be in by 21 March.

Mick Hamer

Tories regain by-election lead

THE CONSERVATIVES have regained a narrow lead in local council by-elections fought since the new year, according to the latest survey conducted by the *New Statesman* in conjunction with BBC 2's *Newsnight*.

Altogether 34 contests took place in January and February. Twenty-seven of these were three-cornered contests in which a total of more than 60,000 votes were cast as follows:

Conservative	23,534	36.6%
Labour	21,040	32.7%
Liberal/SDP	19,355	30.1%
Others	450	0.7%

The Alliance gained eight seats — five from the Conservatives and three from Labour. The overall pattern of gains and losses is as follows:

	Seats defended	*Seats lost*	*Seats gained*	*Seats held now*
Con	15	5	2	12
Lab	14	5	1	10
Lib	3	1	5	7
SDP	0	0	3	3
Ind	2	1	1	2

Labour's score was depressed by three losses in controversial local contests — in Brent, Southwark and Chesterfield. Elsewhere Labour's vote has held up well. In the last fortnight there have been swings *to* Labour in four London contests in Camden, Lewisham and Redbridge: this contrasts with the tendency in the past two years for Labour to do particularly badly in London.

Overall, the by-election results are consistent with opinion poll evidence of a narrow Conservative lead over Labour nationally; but, as ever, the Alliance is doing significantly better in by-elections than in the polls.

Peter Kellner

Council scoreboard

12 January

Lincs CC	Lab hold
Dover & Deal DC	Con hold

19 January

Cambs CC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Isle of Wight CC	Lib hold
Cheshire CC	Con hold

26 January

Leics NW DC	LAB GAIN (Ind)
Adur DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Chesterfield DC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Northumb CC	SDP GAIN (Lab)
Brent LBC	CON GAIN (Lab)
Calderdale MBC	Lab hold

2 February

Plymouth DC	SDP GAIN (Con)
The Wrekin DC	Lab hold
Tayside Reg	Lab hold

9 February

Warks CC	SDP GAIN (Con)
Leeds MBC	Lab hold
Northumb CC	Lab hold
Hartlepool DC	Con hold
Maidstone DC	Con hold

16 February

Redbridge LBC	LIB GAIN (Con)
West Sussex CC	CON GAIN (Lib)
Lewisham LBC	Lab hold
Beds CC	Lab hold
Redbridge LBC	Con hold

23 February

Southwark LBC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Allerdale DC	IND GAIN (Lab)
Glos CC	Lab hold
Camden LBC	Lab hold
Canterbury DC	Con hold
Wirral MBC	Con hold
Cotswold DC	Con hold
Brent LBC	Con hold
Southwark LBC	Con hold
Wychavon DC	Ind hold

CC: County Council; DC: District Council; LBC: London Borough Council; MBC: Metropolitan District Council; Reg: Regional Council.

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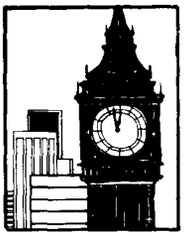

PETER KELLNER Political Editor

It's not just the lies — it's the way they tell 'em

SOME LIES in politics are manageable. If the Prime Minister hypes the number of workers at GCHQ who have signed away their union rights — well, she would, wouldn't she? If the Tory candidate in Chesterfield pretends he is a whisker away from overhauling Mr Benn — well, what do you expect him to say? Such claims, and the routine scepticism with which they are greeted, form part of the very framework of democratic debate.

Some lies, however, are so audacious, so breathtakingly grand and so fundamental, that their unmasking causes that framework to shudder. In the past week two such government lies have been unmasked. The first is that public spending has been 'brought under control'. The second is that now that this has happened, the government will soon be able to redeem its pledge to make substantial tax cuts. The very heart of the government's economic strategy is destroyed if those two arguments are shown to be false. That is exactly what has now happened.

Two weeks ago the government published its public expenditure White Paper. As always, this comprised part history and part prediction: it tells the government's version of where we have come from and where it claims we are heading. Not unnaturally most attention has been paid to future plans: for example, the fact that while spending on education is planned to stand still over the next three years, spending on defence is projected to rise by almost £3 billion.

Connoisseurs of such White Papers have long known that these plans are less a reliable forecast than a symbol of ideological intent. They are usually more revealing in the new data they provide about the recent past. This, at least, should be more fact than fantasy. Mrs Thatcher's government has, in one significant respect, broken with this useful tradition.

The key to the big lie is the way public spending White Papers these days are prepared in 'cash' instead of 'volume' terms. The argument for this change is that government departments must watch 'value for money'. If, say, £10 million is allocated for a new hospital, cash planning requires the health authorities to keep within budget (or so the theory runs); if it ends up costing more, compensating savings must be made elsewhere. But, if the planning is done in volume terms, then — so the critics of the old 'funny money' system argue — the health authorities will hit their 'volume' target (one new hospital) whatever it ends up costing.

As a discipline over current and future work, cash limits have some merit; in any case they were first introduced by the last Labour government. But once the government does away with *all* volume information — about the past as well as the future — it deprives us of any ready way of checking what has been happening to the real level of public spending.

Take the financial year about to end: April 1983 to March 1984. Back in March 1980 the government forecast that public spending for this present year would total £112.4 billion. Its latest estimate of the out-turn is £120.3 billion. On the face of it, the government has spent £8 billion more than it intended. Does Mrs Thatcher gnash her teeth? Do Treasury officials resign in disgrace? Not a bit of it: remember, old boy, those are *cash* figures: we were a touch over-optimistic about inflation in the early days, and we were caught off-guard by the rise in 'demand-related' spending, like unemployment benefit. Otherwise, so the story goes, everything is to plan.

INTO THIS COMPLACENT world has stepped Terry Ward, a scrupulous and diligent Cambridge economist who advises the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee. Last week, in a carefully argued briefing paper for the committee's MPs, he destroyed the government's case. Ward has made four adjustments to the White Paper's cash figures in order to tell us what the Treasury should tell us unprompted: stripped of inflation and sundry accounting tricks, how successful has the government really been in controlling public spending?

First, he has taken the Treasury's 'planning totals' (the sum of what departments are given to spend, plus the contingency reserve) and converted them into constant prices, to remove the increase in spending that is caused by inflation. In 1982-83 prices, he finds that this year's spending will be £11.1 billion higher in real terms than the government originally intended in 1980.

Second, Ward has taken account of two technical factors that arise from government policy — the reduction in the national insurance surcharge and the introduction of housing benefits — in order to compare like with like. This adjustment adds a further £1.2 billion to this year's 'overspending'.

Third, Ward has excluded the proceeds of asset sales. Quite apart from the debate over the merits of such sales, it is a nonsense to use them to reduce the published total for public spending. (To take the point to its extreme: if the government could somehow flog off £120 billion of public assets this year, it could on its present accounting conventions report public spending to be zero.) When asset sales are set to one side, the spending total rises by an extra £1.5 billion.

Finally, Ward adds on the government's debt interest costs (or, to be more precise, the increase in costs over the original plans). Although debt interest payments do not finance any public service, the money has to be spent. Debt interest this year will cost £2.2 billion more (in 1982-83 prices) than the Treasury originally budgeted for.

When all these adjustments are added together, public spending in real terms is likely to be £16 billion higher this year than the government initially planned. Ward writes in his paper to MPs:

> In 1980, and indeed in 1981, the intention was to reduce total spending in real terms up to 1983-84. In fact, real spending increased substantially over this period... Despite the repeated failure to hold expenditure down to plan, the intention remains unshaken. There are no signs at all of learning from experience.

Indeed, Ward argues that the same mistakes are being repeated: the government claims that its overall spending target for the coming financial year is the same as projected in last year's White Paper. In fact, Ward says, when all the accounting jiggery-pokery is removed, the government is now planning to spend £2.7 billion more (at 1982-83 prices) than it announced last spring.

Should we not rejoice in such failure? Would not the state of the economy be horribly worse if the government had kept to its plans? Up to a point, Lord Copper. All else being equal in an underworked economy, it is better for public spending to rise than to fall. But there is all the difference in the world between a deflationary policy that goes wrong and expansionary plan that goes right.

At the moment, because the government cannot achieve what it says it wants without creative (destructive?) accounting, it pursues ever more desperate and irrational stratagems to maintain the illusion that it is in control. It puts nurses out of work; it reduces housing benefit; it privatises national assets; it forces local councils to cut back on the public services they provide. This last point is especially ironic; for not only have local authorities overall been far better than central government at controlling spending, they have also managed to reduce their debts substantially. A study published this week by the Institute for Fiscal Studies* shows that in real terms local government debt has halved since the mid-1970s, while central government debt in the form of gilts has almost doubled. (The IFS's exercise has been to turn the public sector's accounts into a proper balance sheet of assets and liabilities. The exercise makes a mockery of almost all statements ministers make these days about government finances.)

In a rational world the government could not get away with half of its lunatic economic measures. Sadly, these are not rational days. □

**Public Finances in perspective*, available from IFS, 1/2 Castle Lane, London SW1.

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Liverpool docked

Four days after the Milk Cup final clash between Liverpool and Everton, Liverpool council's budget meeting may trigger another Mersey battle. John Rentoul and Christian Wolmar report

EVERYONE loves to loathe Militant. Conservatives, the Alliance, most parts of the Labour Party, the 'non-aligned' Left, other revolutionary groups and, of course, the media all revile Militant as the unacceptable face of socialism. So it is not surprising that they are getting the blame for the imminent confrontation between Liverpool City Council and the government over the budget.

This Labour council is planning to spend more than it is raising in the rates — an apparently illegal move.

But the truth is that if the Liberals had been re-elected last year they too would have come unstuck over setting a rate for 1984/85. The Liberals would have had to push through £6 million worth of cuts which had not yet been allocated. Redundancies on a large scale, in a city with 20 per cent unemployment, would have been inevitable.

Labour reversed those cuts and stopped the redundancies, building up a £19 million deficit instead. Given it had just been elected to carry through a programme different from the Liberals', it would have been hard for it to do anything else. Unlike Britain's other cities, where several years of Labour councils have built up balances to be manipulated, Liverpool has no room for manoeuvre. Just to maintain the current level of spending would have meant that rates would have had to be increased to raise £177 million, compared with £101 million this year, because of the rate penalty system.

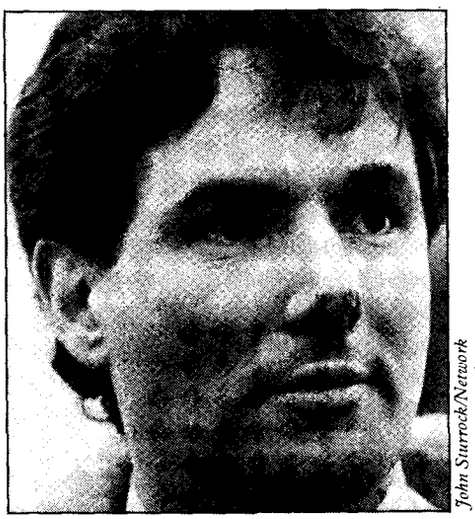
Although Militant's national strategy is to make impossible demands which cannot be met by the existing social order — ie a transitional programme — it seems that in Liverpool a confrontational strategy is the only one open to the Labour group whatever its politics. As one non-Militant councillor put it, 'some of the non-Militant councillors are much more confrontational than the Militant lot'.

Labour's dilemma follows from their election victory last May when they took over from a Liberal-Conservative coalition which had planned a low budget. Liverpool is the first council to suffer a real crisis in the government's squeeze on local authority spending because the government's targets are based on the 1978/79 level, when the city was one of the few urban areas not to have a Labour council.

Labour's election broke a ten-year deadlock in which the council had been 'hung' between the three parties. Sir Trevor Jones, the Liberal leader of the council for most of that time, found the chaotic situation much to his liking. As Noel Boaden, a co-opted member of the education committee and a lecturer at Liverpool University, put it: 'Jones was not interested in developing policies. We had ten years of "no policy" and everything was decided on the specifics of each issue. There was no strategy'.

It was this vacuum that the Militant-influenced Labour Party was able to fill, winning 47 per cent of the votes. Militant has claimed that victory as a triumph for its methods and vindication of its policies. But one non-Militant Labour councillor says: 'The 1983 election results have become something of a myth. Our time had simply come'.

The Liberals' community politics had worn a bit thin too. Noel Boaden explains: 'The Liberals rely on community politics and their



John Sturrock/Network

Merseyside Militant: deputy leader Hatton

Focus teams as their main strategy. But while that is all right in opposition, it's not very convincing once they're in power. David Alton used to go on about how Liverpool's housing was a disgrace long after he was elected chairman of the housing committee.' *Focus* teams were going round making promises about council house repairs to individual tenants while the Liberal-controlled housing committee made large cuts in the repairs budgets. Unlike the Alliance nationally, the Liberals in Liverpool had become tainted by the responsibility of office.

Uniquely among the large Northern towns, Liverpool has never had a really strong and effective Labour Party. Faced with a division along sectarian lines, Labour only won control of the council for the first time in 1955, retaining control for ten of the next 12 years. But the most memorable — and infamous — achievement of those years was a massive housing programme of mainly high-rise flats, which Labour had previously opposed.

During this period, the Labour Party was dominated by the right-wing Braddocks, Bessie as MP and Jack as leader of the council. Membership of the party was small and ward meetings ill-attended; it was boss politics operated by patronage. When the full scale of the housing disaster was realised in 1967, the Labour Party was thrown out of office.

It regained control of the city council only once, in 1972/73, on a platform of opposition to the Housing Finance Act. Unlike Clay Cross, it promptly sold out, splitting the party in the process. It meant rent rises of 25 per cent and the Liberals thrashed the Labour Party into second place at the 1973 election.

The split strengthened the Militant Tendency, which had been slogging it out with the Right in the party since 1964. Liverpool had always been one of its main power bases. Through hard work, it won the respect of many party activists and came to dominate both the District Labour Party and the Labour group on the council.

THE COUNCIL'S Labour group meets on 23 March to decide on its policy for the crucial rate setting meeting of the council six days later. The arithmetics of its task appear insoluble. Without even considering its manifesto commitments to employ more people to repair and build council housing, the council must plan to spend £245 million on a no growth budget for 1984/5. That's an increase of £20m from this year to take account of inflation and the full-year effect of this year's policies. That's £29 million over target which means that after penalties the council will be left with just half its central government grant — £68 million. That will leave £177 million to be found out of the rates compared with £101 million this year.

The total rate bill, including Merseyside County Council's precept, would go up from £141 million to £220 million, a rise of 56 per cent. Then there is the little matter of the £19 million deficit. Trying to recover any of that deficit would push the rates up even higher. Every additional £1 of spending costs the council £3.22, became of government penalties.

It is not a simple case of going all out to break the law. Tony Byrne, Liverpool's finance committee chair and not a member of Militant, says it is 'more impossible to find a scenario in which people can keep the law' than to break it.

Whatever the Labour budget for 1984/85 contains, the implied rate increase will not be acceptable to a Labour group committed to a policy of not increasing rates to compensate for government penalties. The Labour group will probably try to set a rate which would have been sufficient before the penalty system was introduced (this would entail putting the rates up by 16 per cent for a 'standstill' budget).

This budget would be illegal under any reasonable interpretation of section 2(1) of the General Rate Act 1967 which states: 'Every

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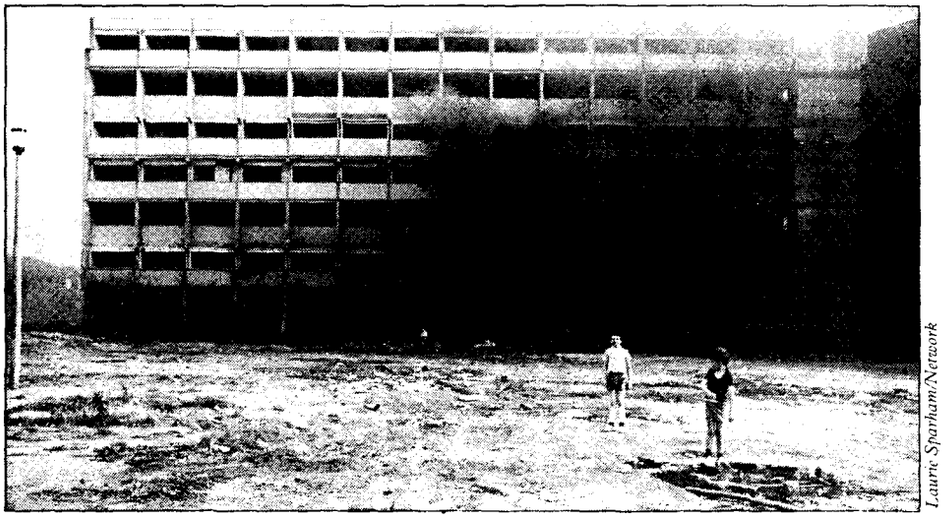

Laurie Sparham/Network

Liverpool's housing: tenants set fire to an empty block near children playing

rating authority shall from time to time make such rates as will be sufficient to provide for such part of the total estimated expenditure to be incurred by the authority during the period in respect of which the rate is made as is not met by other means.' Since the Local Government Finance Act 1982 there is no power to levy a supplementary rate, so there would be no possibility of making up the deficit later.

An unknown number of Labour councillors balk at the legal implications. Paul Orr, the deputy chair of the council, has said publicly that he will not vote for 'an illegal budget'. Unfortunately for him, it is not as simple as that. If he abstained, the courts would still interpret his action as acquiescence in breaking the law. To cover himself, he must vote against the Labour budget (of course, if enough councillors abstain the budget will fall anyway, thereby temporarily removing the problem). One other Labour councillor has been de-selected and his loyalty cannot be counted on and another is ill, making the Labour majority of three vulnerable.

If the Labour budget does fall, the Liberals will almost certainly have to put forward an alternative budget in conjunction with the Tories. They would feel bound to produce something because they long attacked the Labour Party for refusing to take control of the council when it was the largest group. But this budget would only demonstrate the impossibility of Liverpool's situation. Although the choice is perhaps not quite as stark as sacking 5,000 workers or tripling the rates which Derek Hatton, the Militant deputy leader of the Labour group, has been suggesting, it is difficult to imagine the Tory minority party putting up with a massive rate increase (which would be paid largely by the DHSS and Liverpool businesses), or the Liberals putting up with thousands of council redundancies and increased rents.

The most likely outcome on 29 March is deadlock, with the council unable to agree a budget at all. There is no precedent for such a situation. The immediate result will be to make it difficult for the council to borrow money, although it may be able to pledge specific assets in order to cover its short-term running costs. The new financial year starts three days after the meeting, on 1 April. If the council has no budget, it will probably not get the first instalment of its rate support grant, paid monthly at the start of the month.

Five weeks after the budget meeting there are elections for a third of the council seats on 3 May. For psephological reasons Labour is almost certain to make significant gains. If Labour repeats the success of May 1983 it will *gain* 11 seats. It would take a massive swing against Labour for it to lose its majority.

BUT ANYTHING could happen in those five weeks. There is no question of the council officers taking over the running of the city from the elected members. They have no authority to do so — the most recent case law suggesting that the officers have a direct responsibility to the ratepayers is 1906. All legislation since then has made clear that the duty of officers is only to carry out the instructions of councillors.

There might be a presumption on the part of the council's officers to continue existing policy until instructed otherwise. Labour committees would no doubt instruct officers to implement Labour group policy, which would in effect be implementing the Labour budget even after it had been voted down in the full council chamber. Who would then take responsibility in the courts for deliberately running the council into deficit is very unclear. One councillor, when asked by the *New Statesman* about the likely outcome, replied 'please ring and tell me when you find out'.

At some point, however, the council is going to be challenged in the courts — unless the Labour group gives in completely. Any ratepayer, or the Attorney General, could take the council to court to force the council to act within the law.

If the council has levied a rate which is clearly inadequate to meet planned spending, the court can quash the rate and order the council to set a new one. It cannot order the council to change its budget, as the budget has no status in law. If the council has *not* levied a rate, the court will have to decide whether the council is unreasonably failing to set a rate.

In any case the council will be ordered to obey the law. If the Labour councillors refuse, they will be in contempt, and will be fined or imprisoned. If they are made bankrupt, they will cease to sit on the council, causing by-elections. Unless the government passes special legislation to provide for the running of the City by civil servants or accountants, control will pass to the Liberals until the by-elections,

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which would probably, as in Clay Cross in 1974, return new Labour councillors.

The government may feel that as it cannot avoid taking responsibility for running Liverpool in the long term it should take pre-emptive action to administer the city. Contrary to widely-held belief, the government has no general power to send in 'commissioners' to run the council, even if it defaults. Under a very few specific statutes (such as those covering public health and council house sales), there are powers to send in commissioners to administer *particular functions.*

All the government can do is pass new legislation, perhaps giving itself the power to send in 'super-commissioners' to run the council as a whole. This could be another banana skin for Mrs Thatcher, because the government will look as if it is denying the right of local electors to choose their council. This explains why the Conservatives are trying to concentrate public attention on the Militant Tendency. They are relying on the distaste of the electorate for avowed Marxism to distract people from the basic arithmetic of Liverpool's municipal spending needs and the rate support grant penalty system.

The Labour Party isn't keen on Liverpool's crisis either. Exactly the same principles will apply to the confrontation over rate-capping which will develop in the winter of 1984/85, and Liverpool gives the government a set piece dress rehearsal to develop a strategy. Ken Livingstone and David Blunkett, while offering 'moral support', must wish that Liverpool could have held the line until all the other Labour authorities entered the struggle. They fear that an individual council can be picked off, just like Lothian when rate-capping was introduced in Scotland three years ago.

But Liverpool's problems cannot just be 'picked off', whoever runs the council. The city has suffered particularly badly from the recession because its economic base was centred around the docks which have now run down. Without its port, it is a dead end, the obvious choice for factory closures by the multinationals which employ most of its workforce. Unemployment is 20 per cent and its housing a disgrace. The council's conviction that only a massive investment programme can bring about the town's economic renewal is firmly based. Even the last Tory government agreed that there was need for drastic action when it appointed a Minister for Merseyside in the wake of the 1981 riots. The memory of those riots is bound to haunt any civil servant faced with the prospect of running the council. □

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GREENHAM COMMON

Shut up and listen

High-speed justice is being meted out to peace camp women — breaching their right to a hearing, reports Lynne Jones

THERE HAVE been times last month in Newbury Magistrates Court when I have felt like Alice at the trial of the Knave of Hearts. However, he at least had the benefit of trial by jury — albeit an odd one — and when the proceedings became too arbitrary and farcical for Alice to bear, she could leap to her feat, clap her hands and turn the whole charade into a pack of cards.

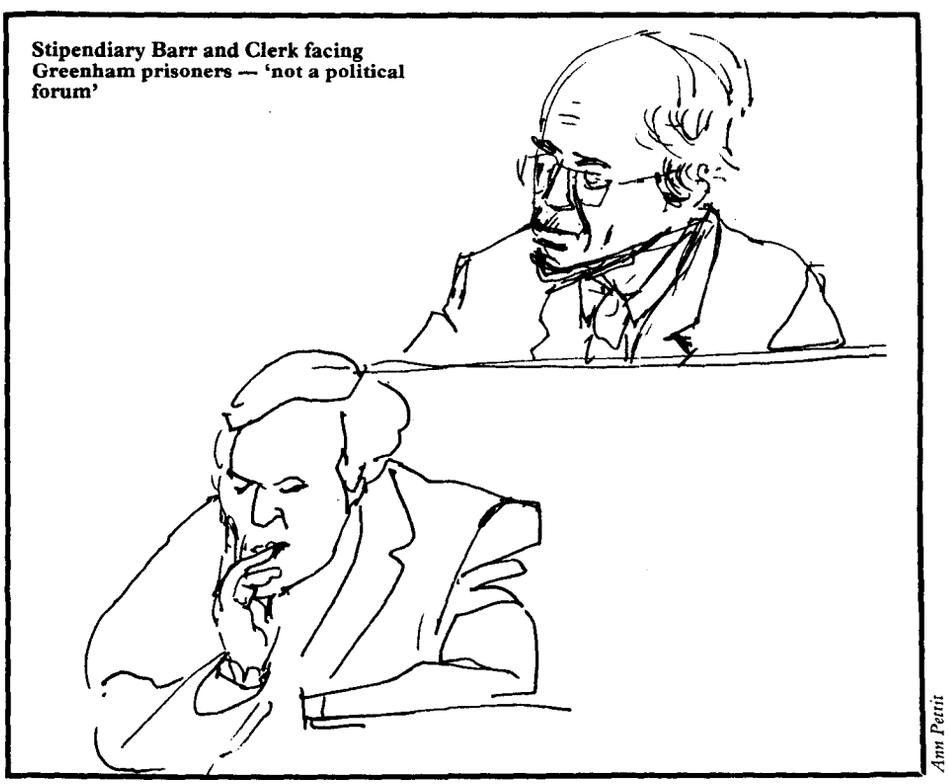
Greenham women are not so fortunate. Any who leap to their feet to complain of injustice may rapidly find themselves in the cells below: laughter is forbidden and I can only be grateful — given the frequency with which the Stipendiary Magistrate Mr Miller cleared the court — that he did not have the Queen of Hearts' power to behead us all as well.

A neatly dressed, clean-shaven, rather dapper man, he arrived at the beginning of January and, to the delight of the *Daily Telegraph*, began to despatch high-speed justice in order to clear the back-log of cases hanging over from the actions at Greenham during the preceding few months. Not only did the rate of cases increase (on occasion 78 were heard in a single day), but so did the rate of acquittals. In his month of residence Miller acquitted some 20 women on the basis of inadequate police evidence.

There was a catch, however. Nearly every one of these acquittals was given to women represented by counsel. Yet legal aid has become increasingly difficult to obtain. ('There is nothing complicated about the British legal system', Miller told an American woman in turning down her application.) Help in the form of a 'McKenzie friend' (a lay adviser who can sit with the defendant) has also been prohibited.

To the unknowing defendants, the procedure appears to offer a most summary sort of justice. 'Shut up and listen!' Miller told a twenty-year-old defendant appearing in a magistrates court for the first time when she asked for such help. He repeated the admonition twice during the trial when she again asked and then, impatient at the way in which she cross-examined the police witnesses, dismissed them without asking if she had finished. In mid-trial her co-defendant, also 20 and on her first appearance, requested an adjournment to seek representation 'because I feel totally inadequate'. This application was again turned down and the court cleared of women murmuring support from the back. On this occasion both women were found guilty of criminal damage and, in spite of asking for time to pay their £35 fines, were jailed for 14 days for failing to provide an adequate address.

AT LEAST six women have so far been jailed for refusing to give any address other than Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp when asking for time to pay their fines. Miller



Stipendiary Barr and Clerk facing Greenham prisoners — 'not a political forum'

Ann Petrii

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repeatedly stated that he wouldn't accept it as a place of abode.

'Why is she so insistent that Greenham Common is her address?' he asked Katherine Cronin, defending Vicki McCafferty. 'She must have relations, a place where she keeps her personal belongings? What is so special about it?'

'She is not required by statute to give her parents' address,' Ms Cronin replied, 'not even her only address, but simply one at which you can be assured that she can be found.'

'But it might disappear overnight!' responded Miller. Ms Cronin went on to point out that the same might apply to squats, caravans and bedsits, all of which have been accepted by the courts and that he *did not have the right* to turn down an address that both the DHSS and the Post Office found acceptable. Moreover, on the basis of mail received at the camp and her presence on the Electoral Register, Judge Blomfield had ruled on appeal at the Reading Crown Court on 13 January that Greenham Common could, in the case of a particular woman, be regarded as an abode.

This was not enough for Mr Miller. 'I have had a personal telephone conversation with the Judge,' he told us, 'and he informed me that his judgment was totally misreported.' Vicki McCafferty was given 14 days.

For many women, who have given up rented accommodation in order to live permanently at the camp and who have no contact with their families, this judgment presents an impossible dilemma. Either they must give a false address which is acceptable to the magistrate, or they have to leave the camp and live somewhere else. The result is a rather subtle form of eviction. While many small-scale evictions continue every day around the base, this is one form that we are not prepared to accept.

The sheer number of cases going before the Stipendiary Magistrates has created a new set of problems. The range of charges is small and in prosecution after prosecution the police evidence is similar. How, then, can a single magistrate hearing all these cases possibly bring to each the fresh and unbiased mind that justice requires? What has occurred is that decisions made on the law — and probably the facts also — are merely re-iterated time after time. In dismissing Owen Green, an expert witness for the defence on cruise missiles, Miller said, 'We all live in the same world and I am perfectly aware of these facts.'

The anxieties about bias extend also to the lay benches. Not only have they listened to over 1,000 cases from Greenham Common, but they are also local ratepayers and some of them serve on the Police Authority. Policing costs stand at well over £3 million and there is extreme hostility to the camp in Newbury, fed by the press and anxieties about an increase in the rates. Given these circumstances it is hard to believe, as one woman magistrate claimed, that all cases are heard 'without fear or favour, malice or ill-will'. Certainly their acquittal rate — under 1 per cent at the time of writing — does not seem to bear this out. Despite this, all applications for these benches to dismiss themselves, or for cases to be transferred to another jurisdiction, have been refused.

IN THE FACE of these difficulties women have become more determined to have their cases tried by juries. Certain charges, such as criminal damage to property in excess of £200, or 'going equipped to cause criminal damage', give this right. One group of women involved in taking down the fence on 13 July last year is to appear in Reading Crown Court.

Since then, well over 200 women have been charged with offences which give them a right to elect for jury trial. Yet in all but three cases these charges have been dropped or modified with the effect of removing that right. Seven women charged jointly with causing over £10,000 worth of damage by painting the American spy-plane *Blackbird* last summer found that their charges were abandoned, without explanation, on their first appearance at court. When 11 women were charged jointly with 'going equipped' to paint the runway on 30 October they were told, only four days before the committal, that the charges had been changed to 'causing £25 worth of damage' and that they would be tried summarily. Almost all the women arrested on 29 October were charged with 'going equipped' and again in almost all cases this charge has been unaccountably dropped.

Mr Barr, the new Stipendiary, has told women that the court is not a political forum. However, having watched the contortions of the prosecution in their charging strategies over the past few months, it is hard to escape the conclusion that we are being subjected to political manipulation designed to contain and control. It would not be for the first time. After the spectacular acquittals in the Bristol Riot cases there seems to have been a marked tendency towads summary charging in 'public order' cases, so defendants cannot bring out what they believe to be the politics of the case.

The suffragettes had a similar experience. On Black Friday, 18 November 1910, 115 women and four men were arrested when a deputation of women marched on Parliament and for six hours were repeatedly, and with great violence, thrown back by the police. The following day those arrested found that, instead of being able to plead their cases, they were merely brought before the bench and reprimanded. Winston Churchill, the Home Secretary, had decided that 'no public advantage would be gained by proceeding with the prosecution'.

Justice, as I understand it, is not about 'public advantage' (whatever that is), nor is it about speed, efficiency and the saving of costs. It is about individual rights and fair and equal treatment before the law, whatever one's financial state or political beliefs. It seems ironic that the arrival of cruise missiles — deployed, we are told, in order to protect our liberties — should trigger this particular round of arbitrary and discriminatory treatment in the courtroom.

Yet it is quite apparent that in spite of the increasingly heavy sentences, ranging from seven days to five months, and the increasing numbers of women in prison (30 at the time of writing), the courts are failing totally in one important function, which is the prevention of crime as they define it.

'I did cut down huge stretches of fence,' Katrina said in her defence, 'and it was one of the most powerful experiences of my life and I will do it again. So I can see that you are in a difficult position because, of course, whatever you do to me I shall continue to keep on doing non-violent action for as long as I believe it is necessary. Your problem is how to stop me.'

Katrina paid her fine. 'Some of us,' she remarked, needed to stay 'free and fighting'. □

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Thatcher's 2nd XI No 1: John Wakeham

WHEN Peter Shore proclaimed in his most basso-serioso voice that it was 'unprecedented' for a Prime Minister to distribute stooge parliamentary Questions wholesale, the crumpled figure of Chief Whip John Wakeham shook with uncontrollable laughter in his corner of the government Front Bench.

A boyish and fresh-faced 51-year-old, Wakeham presents a curious set of contradictions for a Tory Chief Whip. Although chief disciplinarian of the swollen Tory ranks, he is curiously above the battle — while enjoying it — and relaxed about rebellions. Although originally a Heathman and fleetingly a PPS to Jim Prior, he has the absolute confidence of the Prime Minister. Despite her contribution to polarizing Parliament, he himself has no discernible enemies among Opposition MPs, not even in the Labour Whips' office.

In encouraging the government to hold a debate on Cheltenham GCHQ this week, he demonstrated again his new-style handling of rebellions. He knows that, with 397 Tory MPs and an overall majority of 144 he cannot use the offer of enough jobs, or the threat that the government might fall, to buy off rebels. Instead, he allows them to sound off in public and then serve as their powerbroker in private. Over housing benefits, he promised to intercede with Social Services Secretary Norman Fowler and the Treasury. By the time they had pushed the Treasury concession up from £2m to £43m he turned to them and persuaded most of the would-be rebels to accept — if they wanted in future to be treated as 'serious politicians'. He has much of the style of a progressive headmaster, often urging recalcitrants to put themselves in his place.

His fellow Tory Whips glory in his amiable, low-profile skill as an 'operator, his nous as an early spotter and avoider of unnecessary crises. To them he is Captain of the 2nd XI, those Ministers just outside the Cabinet who could readily replace those inside. As Chief Whip he is called into every Cabinet meeting and speaks to the Prime Minister more than any of her Cabinet Ministers.

Father figure

Not bad for a man who only became a full-time politician five years ago — in 1978 — just before Mrs Thatcher took office. He showed he was serious by winding up his London accountancy firm and selling off Curzon Industrial Investments Ltd, the family business with a £100m turnover in which he had a 30 per cent stake. It had an engineering segment, made more out of dealing in Massey Ferguson tractors, but most out of serving as the UK timber factors for state timber exporters of the USSR, Czechoslovakia and others.

Wakeham freely admits that he has been driven by the ambitions his father, the late Major Walter Wakeham, had for him. When the Major emerged from World War I, he wanted to finish his qualification as a graduate engineer, but was stymied by the postwar depression. Instead, he started at Vauxhall Motors as a fitter, rising to Works Director. He quit when General Motors took over and set up a garage in Godalming, where John was born in 1932. When his father returned from World War II, enough profits had accumulated to send the three children to 'posh' schools, including Charterhouse for John. At 17, his father told him that, since he had not won a scholarship to university, he would have to go to work. Since he had no talent for the free world of writing, he ought to try accountancy.

Qualified as a chartered accountant by the time he was 23, Wakeham showed a flair for understanding motives and converting companies into successful enterprises. Fellow accountants saw him as an 'operator' or 'company doctor' rather than jumped-up book-keeper. Within 20 years he had picked up over 60 directorships in the companies he serviced.

Early on, he found solving company problems insufficiently absorbing. First he played around with the Young Farmers and Round Table. Because he was interested in ideas — and because he missed not having been to university — he then took to Federal Union and a number of European federalist groups. He saw Western Europe as 'a new European technological community' in which 'true European companies' could compete with US firms 'in true and equal partnership', as he told the 1966 Tory conference.

Income assured

By then he had been 'blooded' in a hopeless fight against Dick Crossman in Coventry East, having managed to get on to the candidates' list a full day after he joined the Conservative Party at the end of 1964 — at the age of 32. He had begun his four-year stint trying to unseat Hugh (now Lord) Jenkins from Putney. He only thought he had a chance when the count began and Jenkins, with his usual pre-count nerves, said 'I think you might have won . . .'

With enough money by the end of 1973 to make himself, his wife Roberta and two boys independent — including a 66-acre dairy farm near Carmarthen — he was worried that he was not getting enough invitations to the selection conferences for winnable seats, so he added a sexy sentence to his description: 'director of over 50 companies'. It helped him to be adopted for Maldon in Essex — the month before the February 1974 election.

Although he dropped 57 of his 61 directorships on winning the seat, the four he retained — including Curzon — made him very much a part-time MP. He fought constituency battles — against Maplin airport and the planned Foulness seaport. But his entrepreneurial accountant's mind led him to crusade spasmodically for increased economic efficiency, especially around Finance Bill time. He urged taxes on unemployment pay, self-assessment of income tax through US-style simplified forms, more indirect and less direct taxes to help enterprising businesses, especially exporters.

He began to emerge from the run-of-the-mill Tory part-timers only in 1977, when he decided to try to become a full-timer. He replaced fellow accountant Cecil Parkinson on the Expenditure Committee. After serving on the Tory working group on women's taxation, in June 1978 he blasted the Inland Revenue for the 'petty humiliations' forced on women, who were treated as 'illiterate idiots'. A woman, he fumed, was 'told to take her form to her husband, while tax inspectors write to husbands about their wife's earnings. A wife's rebate is paid to her husband . . .' He somewhat spoiled the good impression he made on the Opposition by voting that November against continued Rhodesian sanctions 'to express our support for the internal settlement'.

With one leap

After the Tories' May 1979 victory, Wakeham set a record. Named PPS to Jim Prior, within less than 24 hours he was made one of Mrs Thatcher's Assistant Whips. He moved from this obscurity into the half-gloom of being a full Whip (Lord Commissioner of the Treasury) in 1981. He only emerged finally in September 1981 as Under-Secretary for Industry, under his longtime friend, Patrick Jenkin. He cheered on depressed industrialists at dinner after fancy dinner. One week he spoke four nights running in the big banqueting room of the Savoy. Astonished to find a waiter laughing each night at his repeated jokes, he thanked him, only to find that he spoke almost no English.

Wakeham got into full stride as Minister of State at the Treasury, to which he was promoted in April 1982. Always accused of being a front for the Inland Revenue, the Treasury was thrilled to have a clever accountant who could hold his own with the Inland Revenue about new tax proposals — 'Come off it, I can find five or six ways around that. Go away and try again'.

He won brownie points with his then boss, Sir Geoffrey Howe, and the *real* boss, Mrs Thatcher, by his ability to come up with acceptable solutions to knotty problems. He would find answers which had escaped the abrasive Lord Cockfield (on double taxation) or which encouraged reluctant oil companies to develop marginal North Sea oil fields. It was in the course of propounding his solutions — sometimes against Mrs Thatcher's initial resistance — that he gradually established himself as 'one of us'. It still surprised many, however, last June that Mrs Thatcher chose this meritocratic ex-fitter's son to head the Whip's Office.

Andrew Roth

Next month: Sir Michael Havers

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It could never happen to you. Or could it?

If the Police Bill, now before parliament, becomes law, London's Metropolitan Police in common with other forces will be given extra powers.
These powers may do more to threaten the freedom of the individual, than to prevent crime.
Perhaps you think it does not affect you; that the police will only use these new powers on criminals. But, take a look at the list below. All the incidents in it could happen in certain circumstances, if the Bill becomes law.
Any one of these nasty experiences could happen to you, your family or your friends.

*** You could be arrested, simply because a constable thinks you are committing a trivial offence like illegal parking and has 'reasonable' grounds for disbelieving your name and address.** *[Clause 22]*

*** You could be stopped and searched because a police officer thinks you might use your bunch of keys to defend yourself.** *[Clause 1]*

*** You could be frisked in the street, by force. If the police think you would not understand their reasons, they do not have to give you any.** *[Clause 2(6)]*

*** Your home could be searched for evidence, even if you have done nothing wrong.** *[Clause 8]*

*** You could be locked up for up to four days without charge and refused access to a solicitor for 36 hours.** *[Clause 52]*

*** You could be stripped and intimately searched for a weapon.** *[Clause 49-50]*

The examples we have quoted above represent our interpretation of the respective clauses in the Bill currently before parliament.

All these powers would be open to abuse. It's also worth noting that the Bill confirms that complaints against the police would still be investigated by the police themselves.

We consider that the additional powers sought in the Police Bill are unnecessary. More important, we believe they will not help the police in their vital job of fighting crime in London. For the extra powers will almost certainly lead to increased conflict between Londoners and their police force.

The Police Bill must be opposed. It must not become law. Please, if you are concerned, write to your MP at the House of Commons, and send the coupon to us to get more information.

OPPOSE THE POLICE BILL

For the information pack on the Bill, please return the coupon or ring the GLC Campaign Hotline: 633-4400.
To: The Police Committee Support Unit Room 602, County Hall, London SE1 7PB.

I wish to tell friends and neighbours about what the Bill means, please send me/us the information pack on the Police Bill.

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NS1

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DIARY

The dead are now dancing on the brains of the living. Reagan pumps iron in California, the Kremlin roots for Chernenko; between them the two will soon combine 150 years. How long can the macabre celebration continue? As William Burroughs once wrote: 'Go Home Lazarus!' We too share in the chilly pleasures of necrophilia, now that hereditary politics has been reinstated in Britain. Indeed *The Times* looks forward to there being Earl Macmillans 'a couple of centuries hence'. As always, there are the shadows of ulterior motive. Did the old Prime Minister have the title pressed on him by the present one so as to ensure that Mark Thatcher will eventually become an Earl?

○

Great Truisms of World Leaders (cont). A fortnight ago I suggested that Nixon's finest contribution was his remark, 'It really is a great wall', when he visited the Great Wall of China. Now *Peking Review* (Beijing to them) informs us that Premier Zhao Ziyang rubbed the point home in his recent visit to Washington. If they could not understand his government's policy, 'Zhao advised his American friends to bear one principle in mind', namely that 'China is China'. Presumably this is the kind of talk even President Reagan might understand. Meanwhile a kind reader has sent in Reagan's very own mind-blowing contribution: in a radio broadcast to the American people he urged them never to forget that 'We need God more than God needs us'.

○

I am enjoying Peter Kellner's discussion of proportional representation. But I'm still unconvinced, and favour PR. True, it won't give us majority government, whatever that might mean. But it could allow people, especially minorities, to vote according to their opinions without this depriving them of all influence. Last July, a Gallup Poll found that 62 per cent of the population favoured electoral reform. So why has the all-party campaign and petition on such a clear-cut issue seeped into inconsequence? The reason, I think is that the SDP is not really keen on the idea (which they forgot to mention in their Limehouse Declaration). David Owen would love a presidential-type grip on office, based upon any old parliamentary majority however grotesquely inequitable. The Social Democrats may call for reform so as to 'look' new, but should it ever come to it, they too would prefer traditional, secretive state power.

○

Confirmation of the Janus-faced nature of the Alliance comes with the latest issue of its organ, *New Democrat,* the self-proclaimed 'magazine of the new politics'. The cover announces 'Feminism in the '80s', it shows a red-gloved hand crushing a bottle of washing-up liquid. 'Beyond Cruise' is the lead story, followed closely by an interview with Livingstone. The image, then, is radical and attractive. But what do we find inside? Richard Lamb, one of the joint editors, has a considered piece on the British fascist Oswald Mosley; whom he hails as a 'remarkable man', one who became an 'elder statesman with good judgment and humanity. . .'. Lamb laments especially Mosley's failure to have 'bridged the gap with the Liberals', because Mosley 'might have saved the nation from the horrors of Tory economic policy'. Reluctantly, Lamb admits 'The black spots in Mosley's record were his anti-semitism and his refusal to condemn Nazi atrocities'. Black spots! Just a touch of genocide. . . You can see Lamb's point, though, this is a mere blemish given that Mosley nearly saved the nation, no less — he and those *blackshirts* that seem to have disappeared from memory. If this is the new politics, give me Victorian values.

○

Will the Socialist Society finally get its act together? It set itself the task of generating socialist discussion that was neither electoralist nor vanguardist; inside and outside the Labour Party, to be strengthened especially by the gains of the women's movement. So far it has failed to make any effective impact. To steer between Scylla and Charybdis, the boat itself has to stay afloat and this is in doubt. Along with the CSE, the Society will sponsor a socialist feminist conference (women only) on 19 May. A summer school on 'Socialist Futures' is being planned, to help focus the burgeoning varieties of crystal gazing. Yet such gatherings (and the Society mounted the largest anti-war teach-in during the Falklands, with Mary Kaldor, Bernard Crick, E.P. Thompson and Peter Jenkins) will not be sufficient to ensure the Society's survival even to the next election, let alone to the socialist future. Its AGM on Saturday 24 March is supposed to give it the needed sense of direction. It will be at the GLC's County Hall, which may be a clue as to the Socialist Society's possible role. More information from 9 Poland Street, London W1.

○

I've always loathed the notion of 'word

processing', it reminds me of processed cheese and the worst of American prose. Doubtless the same sort of attitude was held towards the fountain pen by those who wrote with quills. But I talked to Duncan Campbell about his and then tried John McGrath's machine, on which he writes for *7:84.* Ten minutes was sufficient, I was hooked, and could hardly bear to type thereafter. Deranged, I read computer magazines by the fistful. And so, last summer, I bought a micro-computer: I call it my word-box. It arrived with a dead fly in it. Since then, the company that made it has gone bust, I've had corrupted disks that lost irretrievably some hours of writing, and I've suffered the new form of thrombosis known as 'B:DOS ERROR: BAD SECTOR'. Yet it is a wonderfully elegant way to write, if one can overcome its compulsions.

○

Farrukh Dhondy's piece on the TV Raj in the current *New Socialist,* though critical was still too complacent. Salman Rushdie's joke at the recent RSC/Writers Guild session at the Barbican was much nearer the mark: 'At least my parents could fight colonialism, how can I liberate myself from a television series?'. The films are about what it means to be British today: the ominous background of racial violence, the palpable threat (it is transmitted as a threat) of miscegenation, the question of how to behave in such circumstances, the validation of British bestiality. . . . Irrespective of the intentions of those who made *The Jewel in the Crown,* its influence may not be entirely benign. A kind interpretation would suggest that it is merely a series about ruling-class behaviour, like *Upstairs Downstairs,* only in a more exotic setting. But in the Raj films we do not even see things from both sides. Instead white viewers are drawn inexorably to identify with the imperialists.

Islander

Roger Woddis is on holiday.

MADAME BLAVATSKY

INCOMPARABLE GENIUS OR DESPICABLE FRAUD?

The only way to resolve this problem is to read *her* works for oneself, and not what others, unable or unwilling to study and comprehend her monumental works, have said and written. If you are interested in discovering a philosophy, worthy of the highest intellect, embracing all religion and philosophy, and much science, we suggest you write for a reading list to:

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Political traffic jam

France's lorry dispute was a confused affair. But it posed political questions that are central to the Socialist-Communist coalition. Diana Geddes reports

Paris

AS TRANSPORT minister, Charles Fiterman — the most senior of the four Communists in the French government — was responsible for negotiating important concessions to the protesting lorry drivers last week. Instead of placating them, within 24 hours the number of barricades had tripled, most of the main traffic arteries throughout the country were in chaos and tension was rising dangerously.

Two days later, Jacques Delors, the Finance Minister — who is consistently voted one of France's most popular politicians, largely because of his identification with the centre-right of the Socialist party — waived a magic wand and the dispute was over.

It was easy to blame Fiterman in particular — and the Communists in general — for the government's initial failure to bring a potentially nasty situation under control. There was gleeful talk on the Right of a 'May 1968 in reverse', as if revolution were round the corner. Jacques Chirac, leader of the Gaullist RPR party, commented caustically that he 'never did think that a Communist minister could settle anything'.

What effect, however, has the dispute had on the image of the Communists in the country and on their continued participation in the government? In fact Fiterman has not come out of the affair nearly as badly as some would have us believe. As the more serious commentators have pointed out, he carried out the negotiations with commendable skill and tact, reaching an agreement with the two main road haulage federations and representatives of the non-unionised drivers on a set of proposals, which they at first described as 'positive and concrete'.

It was only a couple of hours later, when they saw the adverse reaction from their rank-and-file, that they decided that the proposed measures were after all 'insufficient', and refused to keep their part of the bargain by calling for the lifting of the barricades. In any case, as had been clear from the outset, the federations had no control over the rank-and-file. By the time Delors intervened last Thursday evening, the dispute had been going on for nine days. Many of the barricades were already coming down. The lorry drivers were cold, weary, bored and, most important of all, seriously divided.

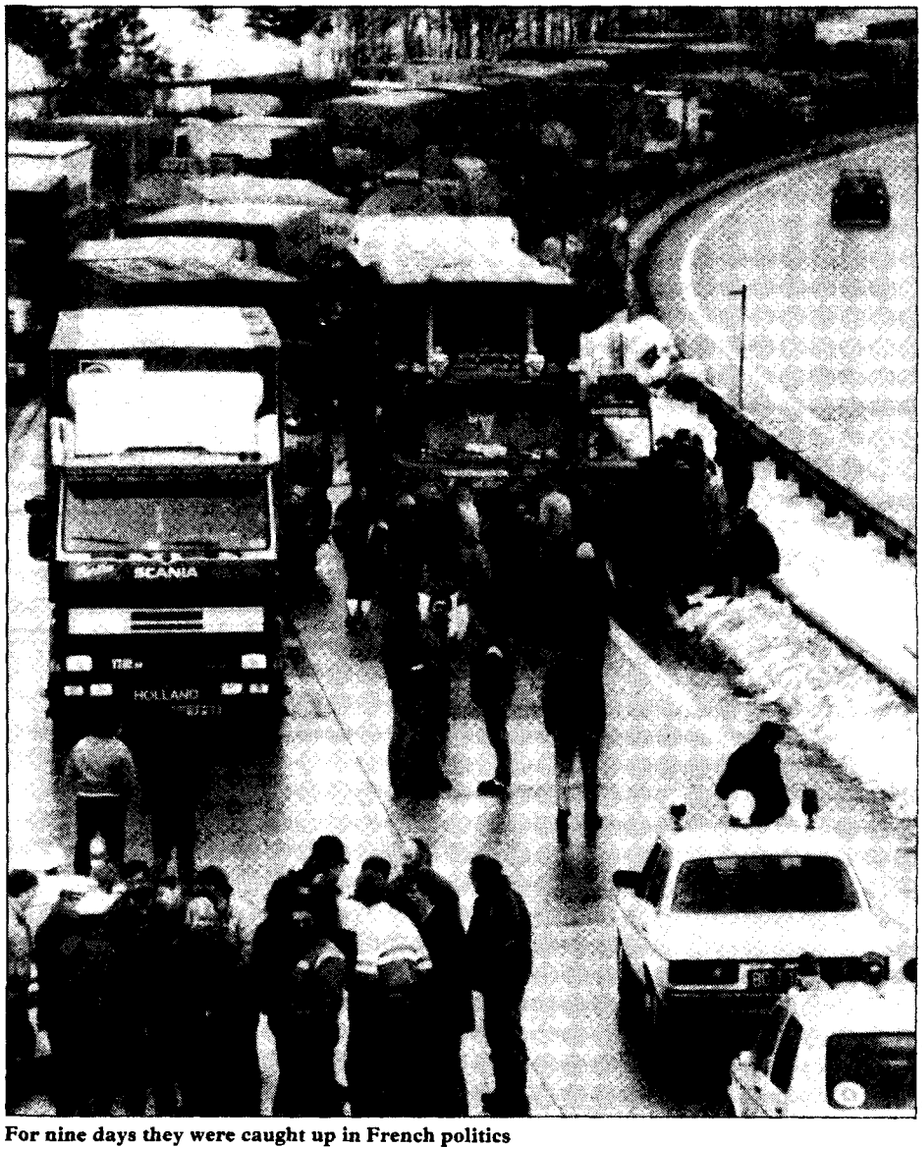
Many of the employed drivers believed that Fiterman's proposals on easing customs clearance over the Franco-Italian frontier had given them what they wanted. They were not interested in holding out for the reductions in fuel tax, which their bosses and the owner-drivers were demanding. They were actually opposed to other demands for more flexible working hours, which they saw as meaning longer working weeks and fewer weekends with their families.

The fact that Fiterman was a Communist probably made negotiations more difficult with the small, strongly independent road haulage concerns, more than a third of which consist of one man and his lorry and another half of which have less than ten employees. But it was not a decisive factor.

Even before the dispute had ended, President Mitterrand went out of his way publicly to express his 'complete confidence' in Fiterman and the other ministers concerned — thereby reinforcing the idea of a united team working together within a Socialist-Communist alliance at a time when the Communist Party has been increasingly outspoken in its criticism of government policy, and when there is growing speculation about the Communists' continued participation in government.

A distinction must be drawn, however, between the Communist *Party* — which like the Socialist Party is outside the government and therefore feels free to criticise — and the communist *ministers* — who have been more faithful in word and deed to the government line than many a Socialist minister. The Communists need to show that when in power they can behave responsibly and patriotically.

FITERMAN IS ONE of the chief advocates within the communist party of remaining in the government. The nearest he has ever got to criticising government policy was when he



Camera Press

For nine days they were caught up in French politics

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issued a warning in January against any *'modernisation sauvage'* of industry — a reference to the threatened loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs in the so-called 'restructuring' of France's many overmanned, outdated, uncompetitive industries, such as coal, steel, shipbuilding, cars, printing, textiles and chemicals.

Georges Marchais, Communist Party leader, was much more blunt in his address to the Party's three-day central committee meeting in January: 'not a single redundancy; not one more unemployed worker!' he thundered. 'The government must show greater firmness... everything is a question of political choice and will', he insisted, before going on to complain of the widening gap between rich and poor, rising unemployment, a cut in workers' real wages, and a general industrial 'mess'.

Of course, he hastened to add, the government's achievements over its two and a half years in office were 'important and encouraging', but nevertheless 'far from sufficient'. The message was clear: the Communists wanted to be identified with the government's success, but not its failures. For the past few months, the Communist Party has been putting down increasingly clear markers to distinguish itself from the more unpopular parts of the government's policy, so that if and when a rupture does come a justification for their action is ready to hand.

It is not our fault, they will be able to say; we have tried to stick to our part of the 1981 pact with the Socialists, which promised economic growth, an increase in real wages and a reduction in unemployment. The reverse is now happening. But what could we do with only four out of the 40 ministers and 44 of the 327 MPs who make up the government's majority in parliament?

So, as the left-wing *Nouvel Observateur* magazine put it, 'the Communists' bags are packed', but that does not mean that they are on the point of leaving. Indeed, they themselves continue to insist that they have absolutely no intention of getting out. 'There is no majority of the Left in this country without the Communists. The Socialists and Communists must sink or swim together', Pierre Juquin, the party's official spokesman, explains.

They complain bitterly, however, of a growing 'systematic brutal, campaign', both on the Right and on what they call the 'false Left', to force them out of the government. Whether or not they ultimately take the decision to leave, they want it to look at least as if they were pushed out. They do not want this time as in 1977 to be saddled with the responsibility for a rupture of the Union of the Left.

Opinion is split on whether the Communists will decide to stay the course in government, or choose to leave a sinking ship. I am among those who believe they will remain, unless the social climate really gets very much worse. While the Socialists are virtually certain to lose their overall maajority in the National Assembly at the next parliamentary elections in 1986, there is just a chance that they might be able to remain in government wit the help of the Communists. Holding the balance of power, the Communists would be in a very much stronger position politically than they are today. It is a gamble for them, of course, but perhaps one worth taking.

President Mitterrand may decide that the communists' constant carping is too damaging for the government and that they must therefore go. The Socialists have an absolute majority in the National Assembly and could therefore continue to govern without the Communists. But it would be an uncomfortable ride. They do not have majority support in the country. Their 35 per cent of the vote in 1981 has now fallen to around 22 per cent, according to the latest opinion polls. Alone, they could also expect a lot more trouble from the Communist-led CGT trade union.

Periodically, there is talk of President Mitterrand deciding to expell the Communists in order to form a government of the centre-left. But it is by no means certain that this elusive centre, for which so many French political leaders have gone in fruitless search, would be big enough to compensate for the loss of the 12-14 per cent of the vote still held by the Communists. The vote that the new centre groupings, set up by the two Faure Senators — Edgar and Maurice — gets in the European Parliament elections in June will be particularly interesting in this respect.

Things will certainly continue to get a lot worse for President Mitterrand in the short term. The industrial relations storm that has been gathering behind the economic crisis over the past 18 months is only just beginning to break. The Communists are pressing to get their men out of the front-line ministries responsible for employment (Jack Ralite) and the public service workers (Anicet le Pors) into less exposed, more popular ministries. However, Mitterrand is happy to leave them where they are for the time being.

The country is going through a wave of what at present are still largely unrelated protest movements: the farmers (against EEC regulations); the lorry drivers (against Italian customs disputes and long-standing grievances over fuel tax and working conditions); parents of pupils in private schools (against government plans to integrate the predominantly Catholic private schools more into the state system); public service workers (against an alleged cut in real wages); steelworkers, shipyard workers, miners and carworkers (against job losses).

But there needs to be some common cause, some underpinning, before these diverse, egotistical movements can be forged into a force potent enough to force the collapse of the government. President Mitterrand's popularity in the opinion polls may be at a record low for any president of the Fifth Republic, but the same polls show that a majority of the electorate do not believe that any of the three main opposition leaders could do any better in the present circumstances. They know that there will be substantial lay-offs and financial sacrifices whatever party is in power. On present evidence President Mitterrand's government looks set to survive its full term until the parliamentary elections in two years' time. □

Diana Geddes in Paris correspondent of The Times.

New Statesman

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SOUTHERN AFRICA

The fight will go on

Suzanne Cronje on the reality behind the Pretoria agreement

PRETORIA'S POLICY of destabilizing its neighbours has paid off — or so it seems to appear to the British press and the white establishment in South Africa. Its main aim has been to contain the country's most effective liberation movement, the African National Congress (ANC). The view is that it has forced Mozambique's political party, its government and military leadership to approve the pact signed with Pretoria last week — according to which each country undertakes not to allow its territory to be used for guerrilla attacks on the other. Similar agreements are in the making with other neighbouring states.

Will this lead to peace and stability in the region? It will not. South Africa's right-wing clients in Mozambique — the so-called Mozambique National Resistance, which has been sabotaging the Mozambican economy — have already announced that as far as they are concerned the agreement is not worth the paper it is written on. They claim to have enough arms to continue terrorising the countryside for at least another two years, which suggests that Pretoria has supplied them in advance with the means of continuing to subvert the Maputo government — even if South Africa now intends formally to honour the letter of the peace agreement. Under such circumstances, Maputo would probably not feel bound to observe its side of the bargain.

This in any case assumes that the ANC is militarily dependent on facilities in neighbouring countries to remain active. In a speech in Maputo last year, ANC President Oliver Tambo turned to the press and asked it to note that the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto We Sizwe, in fact had bases 'in a country not far from here . . . in South Africa itself, among the people of the country' and nowhere else. In fact, Pretoria has never

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Life is just a bowl of berries.

The girl died shortly after this photograph was taken.

She was 17.

Like about one million desperately hungry people in northern Ethiopia, she was living on berries and seeds. (The berries are poisonous and have to be boiled repeatedly to get rid of the poison.)

The earth is dry after six years of drought, and people weak from hunger are falling prey to all kinds of disease.

Aid has been sent by Governments through official channels, but is not getting through the Russian-backed Ethiopian Government to the northern areas of Eritrea and Tigray where liberation fronts are in control.

Unless food and medicines get through now, relief workers believe over 200,000 innocent people will perish, more than died in similar conditions in 1973.

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convincingly demonstrated the existence of Umkhonto bases in neighbouring countries. An exiled leadership is linked to the military command and military supply lines obviously exist through friendly states. South Africa has a very long land border and insufficient reliable white manpower to patrol it effectively. Besides, white-owned border farms are still deserted, despite legislation to encourage the use of this land for the sake of security.

Prime Minister P. W. Botha and his generals are fully aware of this. The non-aggression treaties they have at last won are at least in part a confidence-building ploy — to convince opinion at home and abroad that South Africa's security is mainly an *external* problem. The authorities are now going to extraordinary lengths to make this point. For instance, in a long briefing of selected Western journalists — whom he called 'the diplomatic elite of the fourth estate' — Major-General Steenkamp of the South African police claimed that the number of trained Umkhonto personnel deployed within South Africa at any one time did not exceed thirty. He estimated Umkhonto's total trained manpower to be between 1,500 and 2,000 — of whom 300 were in forward areas in neighbouring states. The ANC, to whom he constantly referred as an ally of the South African Communist Party, did not, he claimed, have any permanent internal infrastructure, without which it was 'limited in its military action to cross border "hit-and-run" or reconnaissance-style missions'.

Steenkamp's briefing assumed that the ANC is nothing but a Moscow pawn. In the course of his hour-long talk, he did not once refer to the fact that the South African racial context might throw some light on ANC's aims. He did, however, speak of allegedly Soviet-inspired tactics such as 'the building of a "broad democratic front", unifying all "progressive forces" under the revolutionary leadership of the ANC on the basis of the principles laid down in the Freedom Charter'. This was a clear reference to the United Democratic Front (UDF), an umbrella organization formed last year to oppose the constitutional and other administrative innovations in South Africa. The Freedom Charter, drawn up in 1955 by the ANC and other democratic organizations, now forms the basis of the ANC's political programme. It is therefore significant that the Freedom Charter was also adopted by the UDF which, according to its General Secretary, Popo Molefe, last November had 578 affiliates, representing trade unions, church groups and social organizations. Molefe said that while the UDF and the ANC were both opposed to apartheid, 'we must say categorically that we have no relationship with the ANC and don't envisage one because we are operating legally, and it is banned'.

STEENKAMP'S ALLEGATION that the ANC has no internal structure is contradicted by the frequency and spread of its military attacks — only the most spectacular of which are usually reported. A US government intelligence report leaked in 1982 listed about 20 unreported events of this kind over two months in the northern Transvaal alone. For the first time in many years the South African police establishment has been substantially increased and local 'commando' forces are being developed to cope with the attacks.

This resistance will not be muted by non-aggression pacts between South Africa and its neighbours. But, if the agreements were to cut off the ANC's military and political communications, the security situation could become distinctly more unpleasant. At present the Umkhonto method of warfare concentrates on military and economic targets and on departments which directly implement apartheid; there is a deliberate avoidance of hitting civilian groups. Steenkamp already prepared the ground for a possible change by speaking about 'increasing attacks on civilians'. While this has not been in evidence, there is pressure within the ANC for a tougher policy — blowing up a white suburb might be a salutary lesson, to put the argument in its most extreme terms. In a recent interview, Umkhonto leader Joe Modise reiterated that the ANC was not 'going to go out to kill women and children'. But he also threatened that Umkhonto would take prisoners and treat them as the South African police treated his men. 'Because not far from now on we are going to capture some of their people. We are going to make a point of it'.

If it were possible to isolate South Africa — and in doing so sever the links between the ANC and its external leadership — this might merely free it from the moderating influnce of world opinion, as Pretoria itself feels free to act ruthlessly so long as Washington protects it from the Third World. □

BRUNEI

Polo partners

Frank Warner examines a Far Eastern despotism

Camera Press

Sultan plays polo, but bans politics

THE PRINCE OF WALES was the guest of honour when, on 23 February, the tiny, oil-rich sultanate of Brunei celebrated its independence from Britain's control of its foreign affairs. The 6,000-seat banqueting hall where he was dined is part of an enormous, newly completed royal palace. The prince also played in the Sultan's polo complex — not far from which, in the Jerudong prison, fifty or so political prisoners are immured, some of whom have been in jail for 17 to 20 years without trial.

Brunei is on the north coast of Borneo. Its dependance on Britain began in the 19th century, when the Brookes from Sarawak (the White rajahs) from the west, and the capitalist North Borneo Company in the East, had reduced the Brunei empire to a small area of jungle around the old capital. Had the British not intervened, Brunei would probably have disappeared entirely.

The British have since maintained that Brunei's internal affairs were none of their business. The Sultan was responsible for his Islamic Malay subjects; the British for external affairs alone. But Brunei would not have lasted long without the British protection and observers have no doubt that the British have had an economic interest, particularly since the discovery of oil in 1929 and the subsequent development of the oil and gas fields by Shell. This and the close relationship of the nobility of Brunei with Britain, the strong military connection and the presence, until very recently, of British advisers in Brunei government departments, mean that Britain has to take some responsibility for the present conditions of Brunei.

When the banquets and ceremonies are over, the political prisoners in the Jerudong prison will remain. These now elderly Malays were once members of the Brunei People's Party, which overwhelmingly won the only popular election ever held in the state. When this party took 80 per cent of the vote in 1961, the Sultan dismantled the parliament, causing a rebellion in 1962, which was then represented as an external threat — and put down with the loss of many lives by British troops (including Gurkhas) from Singapore. Two thousand five hundred people were detained. Some escaped with the help of their guards, some died in prison and many were released on condition that they swore allegiance to the Sultan.

One of the reasons for the rebellion was the attempt by Britain to include Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei in the newly formed Malaysian Federation. When it was clear that the Federation was secure, the British became anxious to leave. But the Vietnam war to the north and the later oil boom which gave the Sultan new wealth and confidence made the British hesitate about leaving. During the sterling crisis of the 1970s, Brunei's reserves helped to bail out the pound sterling. Since the 1960s, Brunei has had the appearance of a British neo-colony.

The British advised and trained the Brunei army; the British Army and SAS used the

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jungle training grounds; there were British advisers at their desks and a statue of Winston Churchill was erected outside the museum in the centre of the capital. The sons of Brunei nobility went to Millfield School and to British universities and polytechnics to train as administrators in the growing state bureaucracy.

Since the rebellion, the Sultan has maintained a state of emergency. There is no political debate. The religious affairs department is becoming an increasingly important part of the state apparatus. Heavy sentences are given to those expressing political dissent.

THE MAJORITY of the 200,000-strong population is Malay and those with jobs in the government enjoy high incomes. But a major problem for the government is the presence of 60,000 Chinese, who play a vital part in the economy, not least in the oil and gas fields. There are Chinese millionaires (who control the non-oil economy), but there are also the Chinese in shanty towns around the capital. Less than one-fifth of the Chinese have Brunei citizenship and the vast majority will now become stateless, having only an 'international' identity card.

Despite the fact that there is little outward sign of communal tension, many members of the Chinese business community fear for the future; many have begun to leave the sultanate. Some are afraid that, with independence, there will be a growth of Bumiputra ideology (a demand for the Malays for control over economy and a Malay cultural hegemony). Malaysians, in their turn, must fear an exodus of Chinese across the Sarawak border. With his vast revenues from the oil and gas hardly affected by the world recession, the Sultan can provide high living standards, good education and health care for most of his small population. He should feel secure. Clearly, he doesn't.

Recently, the British have been anxious to present Brunei to the world as an independent modern state at peace with its neighbours. British advisors were removed; the Sultan took an interest in administration and was encouraged to relate to old enemies in the region.

But, last year, negotiations for independence nearly broke down. The Sultan insisted on the Gurkha battalion remaining. There's already a Royal Brunei Malay Regiment, equipped with the most modern weapons; although the British officers and NCOs are being replaced, the British will be there to support and advise. There's also a 'Praetorian Guard' of ex-Gurkhas, who guard the palace and the political prisoners. But this was not enough.

The Sultan wanted the Gurkha battalion and, to get it, he threatened to break off the independence talks. He unexpectedly took the £3,000 million managed by the British Crown Agents (threatening them with bankruptcy yet again) and put it in the hands of American banks. He was reported to have threatened to take over the oil fields. He sacked the High Commissioner, who was replaced by Francis Cornish, Prince Charles's polo playing assistant private secretary. The British gave way. The Gurkhas could stay — although not to be used for internal purposes and to be paid for by the Sultan himself (some £2 million per year, it is said).

The implications of their presence should not be overlooked. The Brunei People's Party rebellion of 1962 was, after all, presented to the world as an external threat, and it cost the lives of British troops to suppress it. And the Falklands war has shown us again how very easily British forces can become enmeshed in ambiguous conflicts in tiny, far-away places — particularly, as in this case, where we have left a despotic state with an archaic political structure, with serious problems in a turbulent part of the world. □

THIS ENGLAND

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□It was ordered by his mum Princess Hind of Arabia after the bakery was recommended by friends. Amid the white icing and pale blue satin ribbons is a scene from World War One depicted in mouth-watering chocolate and marzipan. — *Walthamstow Guardian* (John Garrett)

□Guests who take £50 weekend breaks at a Norwich hotel are to get a taste of life in 1984, George Orwell style. Like characters in the novel, they will be watched constantly and fed boiled cabbage every day. — *Daily Mirror* (David Hope)

□'I do occasionally have a boiled egg and cut off its head with a sharp whack and feel every bit as satisfied as learning that a nationalised industry has returned to its rightful owners.' — Interview with Kenneth Williams in the *Guardian* (Julian Petley)

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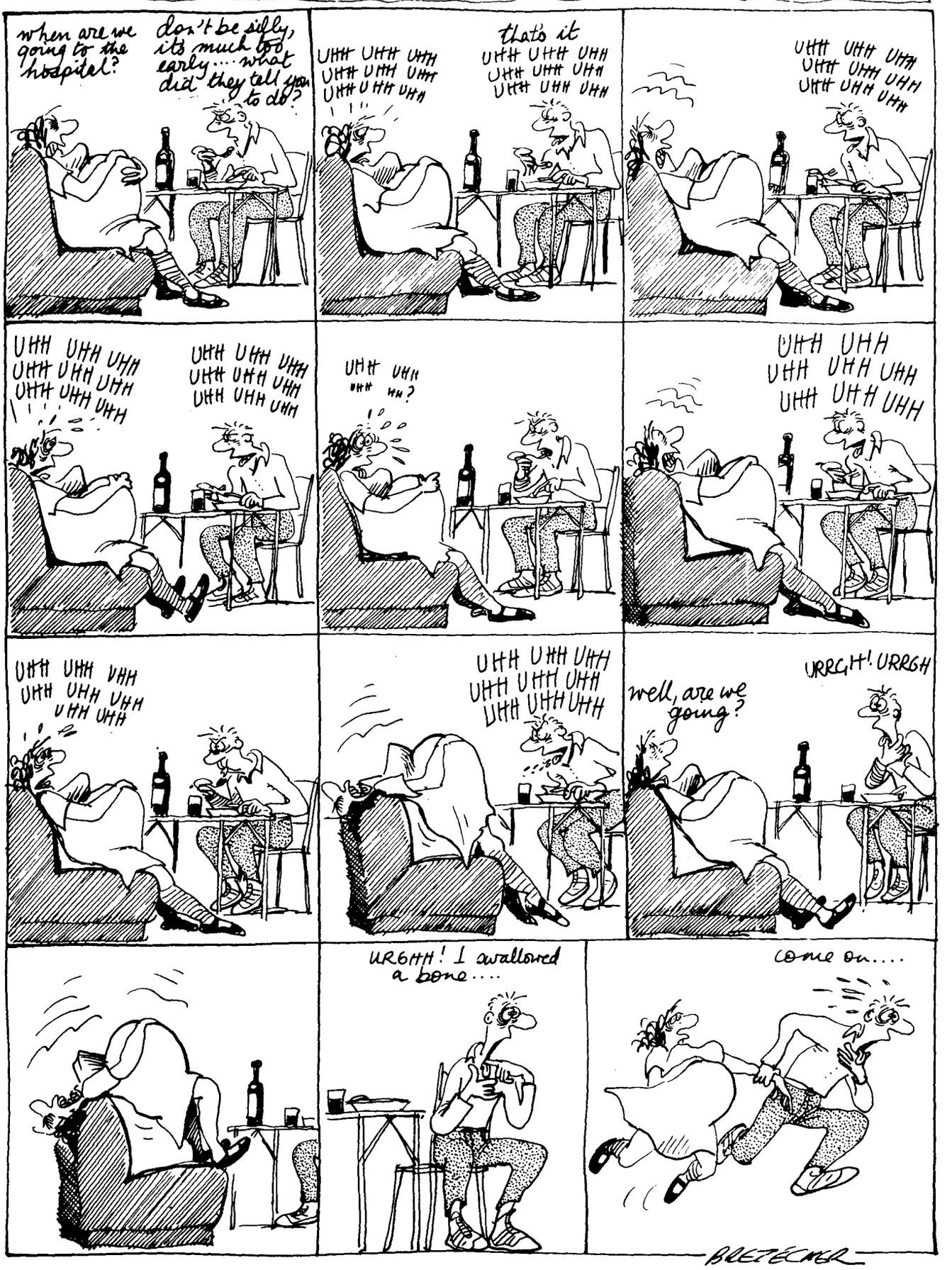
BRETECHER

CASUALTY


when are we going to the hospital?
don't be silly, it's much too early.... what did they tell you to do?
UHH UHH UHH
that's it
URRGH! URRGH
well, are we going?
URGHH! I swallowed a bone....
come on....
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

Feminism and pornography

Deborah Cameron, London SW19

Annette Kuhn (*NS* 24 February) seems to think that feminist opposition to porn is most significantly expressed in a demand for state censorship which she considers politically suspect and practically worthless (porn is big business and will just go underground). There might be some point to this critique if feminists really did advocate state censorship, but I know of no women's group that does. We have always concentrated on direct action (i.e. picketing or damaging sex shops, which directly attacks the industry's profits) and political education. Yet it is almost universally believed that we favour state censorship. Why?

In fact there are two reasons. One is a wish to ally feminists with the bogey-persons of the far right (see subeditor's blurb at the top of Annette's piece) and thus discredit them. I might counter this by asking what Enoch Powell has in common with CND (answer: he has criticised nuclear defence policy). Just so much have feminists in common with the Festival of Light. Mary Whitehouse opposes porn from an explicitly anti-woman, pro-family perspective, and to line her up with WAVAW is either an absurdity or a cheap propaganda move.

The second reason is that liberals refuse to accept the feminist critique of civil liberties. This critique does not merely point out, as Annette does, that for feminists there can be no unpolitical and thus inviolate 'personal' sphere. More radically, it asserts that the individual whose freedom is defended is a *male* individual. There is a (usually unperceived) conflict between men's right to consume female bodies and women's right not to be so consumed — that is, their right to human dignity. To see this conflict it has to be accepted that porn is not just something that might affect some men's attitudes, but a systematic practice whose material effect is to keep women in their place.

Oddly enough, this point is always accepted immediately when it is made about racist literature. Everyone thinks that black and Jewish men have a right not to be degraded and coerced by vicious representations which both engender and strengthen racism. When it comes to pictures of women, however, a different standard operates, for whereas white liberal males have no interest in the wares of a putative National Front shop, they do want to keep on looking at pornography. They know this is politically dodgy, so they defend it in terms no progressive (even Annette) dare challenge: civil libertarian, anti-state censorship terms.

When are we going to reject the terms of this debate as essentially obfuscating and anti-feminist? Porn cannot be reduced to an issue of civil liberties because in opposing it we speak not of individual freedom but of the liberation of a class.

Regrouping on the Left

Geoff Robinson, Secretary; Terry Farrer, Treasurer; Socialist Federation, Bradford

Dave Harrison's article (*NS* 17 February) on the founding conference of the Socialist Federation had a couple of minor mistakes. Before the government's attack on trades union rights at Cheltenham, we did predict that such attacks would happen — but *not* that they would be inevitably successful. On the contrary, we believe that socialists have to fight actively attacks on all workers and minority groups. It is this emphasis on activism based on political analysis that has led us out of the SWP and into an attempt to build a new revolutionary organisation, which can link up with rank-and-file workers and autonomous minority groups.

We do congratulate you on getting some comment out of SWP — even if it was totally unhelpful. For those of us expelled in Bradford, the bitterest pill was that the organisation we helped to build did not give us the basic right to argue our case with other party members, and was unwilling even to print the reasons for the expulsions so that we could challenge them.

While we don't wish to carry out a debate with SWP in the columns of the *New Statesman*, we do challenge SWP to a public debate on the current political period, their fall in membership and the dropping of internal democracy, without which no revolutionary party can claim to be in the tradition of Marx and Lenin.

For the record

Rachel Hodgkin, The Children's Legal Centre, London N1

I am afraid that during the editing of my piece on children's rights (*NS* 24 February) a couple of errors crept in.

Children on the run certainly cannot be arrested on sight — this is only true of children in care under care orders. And it is not that 'Almost a quarter of children will experience separation from their parents before the age of 16' but that almost a quarter will experience their parents separating from each other before the age of 16.

Community policing

Leslie Curtis, Chairman, Police Federation of England and Wales

I refer to your report, 'Community police arrest too few' (*NS* 24 February), which makes the categorical statement that community policing at Brixton 'is in jeopardy following a restructuring aimed at weeding out officers with low arrest rates'. If you read Christian Wolmar's article, you will see that not one fact is given to support either the headline or the allegation. Indeed, the local Chief Superintendent is quoted as denying that those 'with low arrest rates' would be weeded out.

While I fully accept that you are entitled to criticise the police, I feel you should be more careful in making wild allegations when the police and the community in Brixton are both making genuine efforts to bring about a permanent improvement in relationships. The article itself indicated the truth of this. Four years ago there would have been no question of local community leaders being able to have public consultations with the police on the deployment of manpower.

Hardening attitudes

Dr J. Gleisner, Lecturer in Soviet Politics, The University of Leeds

Stephen Cohen (*NS* 17 February) is absolutely right to say that Soviet attitudes towards East-West relations have never been monolithic. But I think he is guilty of over-simplification himself when he writes that the major ideological division lies between 'Western-oriented advocates of détente and forces advocating a return to 'Stalin's Iron-Curtain isolationism'.

My reading of the situation suggests that there exists a third current of opinion, which is both opposed to détente and committed to an active international policy. Prominent representatives of this tendency inside the Soviet political establishment are B. Ponomarev, Central Committee Secretary in charge of international affairs, and P. Kosolapov, editor of the Party's main theoretical journal, *Kommunist*. It is these people, not the 'isolationists', who are currently mounting the most serious and effective challenge to the doveish policies of the progressively-minded group of advisers whom Andropov gathered around himself during his short term of office.

So, if the Reaganites really do believe that a victory for Moscow's traditionalists would be to their advantage, they could not be more wrong. Such a victory would most probably be succeeded by a heightening rather than a lessening of global tensions.

Correction

In last week's civil liberties 'Campaign directory' we printed an incorrect address and telephone number for the **Welsh Campaign for Civil and Political Liberties.** They can be contacted at **13 Dogo Street, Pontcanna, Cardiff, Wales. Tel 0222-42265.**

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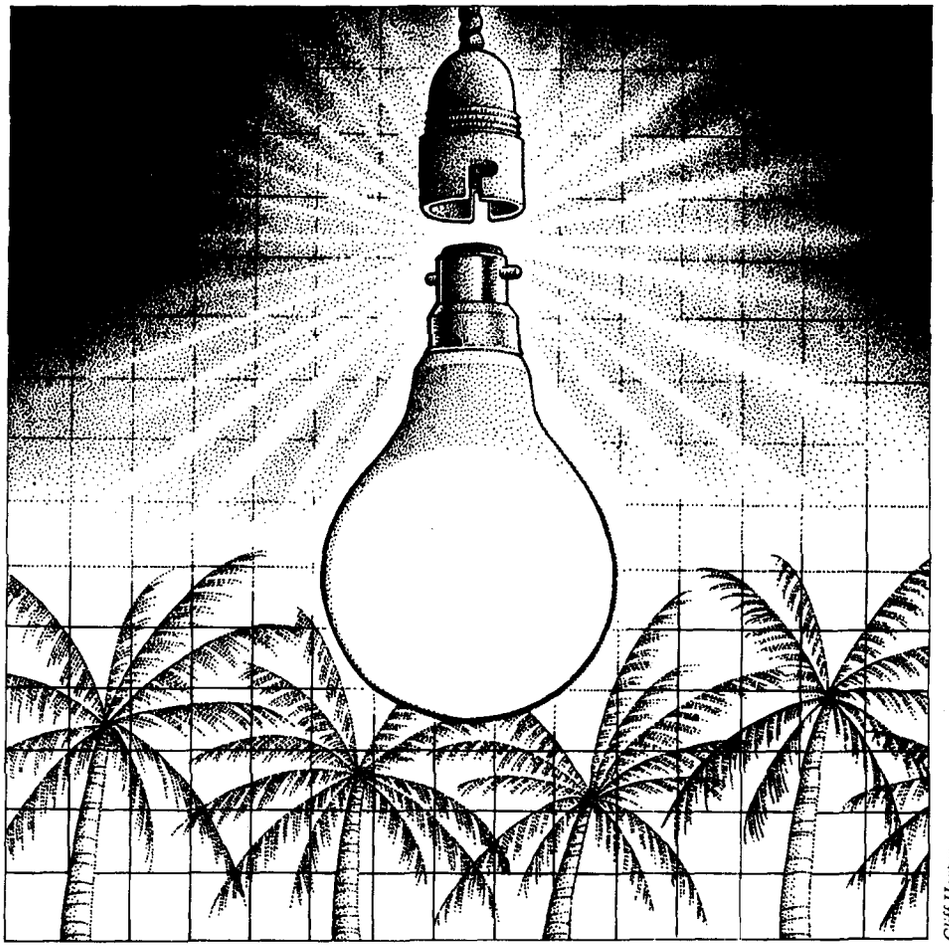
Jon Cook

Waking dreams

The Cargo
NEIL RENNIE *TNR Productions, 19 Westbourne Road, N7* 95p + p.&p.



Cliff Harper

The Cargo establishes an intense imaginative zone somewhere between the conscious and the unconscious mind. The conscious mind finds its equivalence in a finely controlled syntax: each of the poems is composed out of grammatically complete statement, the evidence of order and coherent development. But this evidence is deceptive. What the syntax combines is the terms not of sense and reference but of enigma and image, citation and allusion. As in dreams, these poems offer the fragments of a landscape and a narrative which is not outside us but about us. As in dreams, the poems create a heightened expectation of meaning which cannot be fulfilled and instead plays itself out in conjecture and surmise or nervous laughter.

Like any good poetry, *The Cargo* has its source in the pleasure that comes from repetition and variation in rhythm and patterns of perception: each of the poems in the sequence is linked by a momentary disclosure of form, whether it be in the waves beneath a launch that 'change places/in a series, each with another one the same' or in 'a row of sunsets in a sky of Ben Day dots', but each of these disclosures fails to secure our relation with a human or natural world because all are surrounded by an intimation of panic over some loss whose nature can be guessed at but never fully named. The poetry teases us with what we'd like to forget, that security is only an appearance.

The power of *The Cargo* is closely connected with the skill that Rennie deploys in handling his highly-charged material, the fantasy world of imperialism. This might seem an automatic disqualification given that we've been subjected to an overdose of imperialist fantasy lately. But Rennie's starting point is not in white nostalgia but in the cargo cults alluded to by the title, the series of Millennarian and apocalyptic movements that occurred in the Melanesian islands from about 1885 until after the Second World War. Their significance for Rennie's poetry is manifold. They provide the tropical setting of the poems and one of them in particular, the Cult of John Frum, is worked into a fragmentary narrative. But the cults do more than supply a setting. They provide the poet with something like an allegory of imaginative activity itself. Through the cults, the inhabitants of Melanesia changed the meaning of the technological and material abundance of the whites by inventing a myth of an imminent apocalypse which would accomplish the restoration of this abundance to its rightful owners who were, in the terms of the myth, the Melanesians themselves. Thus the familiar objects of the white world — planes and boats, lamp bulbs and cans of bully beef, the whole apparatus of trade — were transformed into so many apocalyptic signs: the arrival of any plane or boat could be the start of the great change; there was no such thing as an ordinary occurrence. The cultic myths exemplify the work of imagination in two senses, then: they re-signified the elements of a world and, in so doing, made it strange, something other and outside the dominant definition and perception.

Estrangement is central to Rennie's poetry and it works through the devices of abstraction and equivalence. Human characters in the poems are given no more or less weight than an object world in which apparently ordinary things, a light-bulb or a piece of clothing, take on the condensed significance of a fetish:

> In the store
> a Mazda bulb makes comic stripes
> on the corrugated iron walls...

These lines from one poem in the sequence, 'Prayer', are themselves caught up in an intricate weave of repetition and cross-reference such that each of the main terms recurs in another poem, as the stripes on John Frum's shirt, for example, or in the 'islands in a bright blue ocean/checked on both our shirts', worn by a white man and woman whose fading love affair is fitfully apparent as another narrative element in the sequence of poems.

To begin to read *The Cargo* in this way is to indicate one aspect of its modernity. The activity of language is what the poems are about and in a way which connects Rennie's work with that of Joyce and Eliot or Pound and Baudelaire. But the achievement of writing in *The Cargo* is to make a reflection upon language more than an academic game or a kind of linguistic masturbation. These are poems that come from the other side of the looking glass, a place where perspective and subject change with disturbing rapidity. The poems work with the myths of the cargo cult, but they draw upon the fragments of other myths, too: those of Hollywood movies, for example, and their tropical fantasy which presents the natives and their disturbance as a symbolic setting for white romance. Thus, *The Cargo* draws upon Melanesian cults for a resistant myth about imperialism but juxtaposes that with imperial myths about the tropics. The outcome of this juxtaposition is not some happy synthesis, a new version of pastoral, but a pervasive disintegration, the loss of any single organising perspective. Rennie draws upon an established cultural code about the South Seas, but instead of playing it back to us straight, paradise comes hollowed out by anxiety. As we read the poems, the terms of paradise become the terms of hell.

In this condition of pervasive alienation there

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is no secure relation between the world of things and the world of words any more than there is a single literary genre which will authorise writing as either representation or expression. Each of the poems in *The Cargo* confronts this situation with a cool resolve. They each enact an effort to focus a perception which, given the very context they evoke, is doomed to failure. Given this context, writing poetry and inventing myths become so many nervous attempts at a cover-up. What is covered up may be the powerlessness of one culture in its confrontation with another or the compulsive failure of love. Neil Rennie's book encompasses this knowledge of loss with a sophistication far removed from the genial imaginative domesticity of some recent English poetry. *The Cargo* is both a work of formal experiment and visionary intensity. It should be more widely read than its current mode of distribution is likely to allow. □

POETRY — 2
Jennifer Breen

Canon-ising

The Complete Poems and Fragments
WILFRED OWEN ed. JON STALLWORTHY
Chatto two vols £50

This *variorum* edition of Wilfred Owen's poetry arouses great hopes: has Professor Stallworthy discovered an important poem by Owen which is here published for the first time? And has he uncovered major new facts about the texts, chronology and origins of Owen's poems?

The answer to both these questions is, boringly, no. In fact, this work has a *Waiting for Godot* air about it. Professor Stallworthy's Estragon keeps echoing Dr Dominic Hibberd's Vladimir: 'DH argues persuasively for the influence of Robert Graves' *Fairies and Fusiliers* (1917), which WO bought on the day he began "Asleep" ', or 'As DH was the first to perceive [about a fragmentary translation]...' We begin to long for Vladimir himself to appear, saying, 'Come on, Gogo [Estragon], return the ball, can't you, once in a way.'

> Estragon: What about hanging ourselves?
> Vladimir: Hmm. It'd give us an erection.
> Estragon: *(highly excited)* An erection!

Well, not quite. We only see Stallworthy making fashionable assertions about 'the love that dare not speak its name' that he detects in some of Owen's warm-up exercises in the 'nineties decadent' mode.

Nevertheless, Professor Stallworthy confirms two main points about the chronology of Owen's poems which have recently been educed by Hibberd. First, no longer can any critic or TV programme-maker continue to discuss 'Exposure' — a landmark in Owen's poetic development — as if it were composed before Owen was sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital for Neurasthenic Officers where he met Sassoon in August 1917. Hibberd and Stallworthy prove that 'Exposure' was begun in December 1917, after Owen met Sassoon, and finally revised in France in September 1918.

Secondly, no longer can any critic state that 'From My Diary July 1914', with its use of half-rhyme, shows that Owen had begun to develop his modernistic style before the War. From the evidence of watermarks, Hibberd's conjecture is confirmed by Stallworthy: 'From My Diary' was drafted between October 1917 and January 1918. Stallworthy must be praised here and elsewhere for his diligence in matching watermarks on dated Owen letters with watermarks on undated Owen poems.

Professor Stallworthy claims even more: 'To present for the first time a map of Owen's poetic development, this edition offers in one chronological sequence the latest text of every poem and fragment'. But does it always? Stallworthy prints significant changes in an important war poem, 'The Sentry', because the 'revisions' on the 'fair copy' that was used by previous editors 'show that this fair copy must antedate that sent to SS on 22 September 1918, which I follow'. So Stallworthy prints, for example, 'shell on frantic shell/Lit full on top' instead of the familiar and more effective 'shell on frantic shell/Hammered on top'. An examination of the BL MS. shows that 'Hammered' was inserted by Owen on this BL MS. *after* he had crossed out 'Lit full'. Even to an amateur, this deletion and substitution must suggest that the BL MS. is later than the SS one.

Moreover, it's a pity that Professor Stallworthy didn't keep to the usual editorial rule that, when poems — in Owen's case, only four poems — have *'the poet's authority'* (sic), by virtue of their publication during the poet's lifetime, the editor should adhere to the poet's approved printed text. In the case of 'Miners', which was published on 26 January 1918 in *The Nation*, Stallworthy reverts from this printed text to an MS. version because he wishes to delete emendations that Owen adopted at Sassoon's suggestion. Thus, for example, the last line of 'Miners' becomes 'Left in the ground' instead of the Owen-approved 'Lost in the ground'.

For his chronological ordering of poems, Stallworthy dates poems by Owen's last revision. Owen, however, revised some of his exercises in sonnet-writing, such as 'The Sleeping Beauty' and 'Autumnal', probably in order to show the whole range of his work to Sassoon in August 1917. Thus these early sonnets are interspersed with Owen's first war poems such as 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' and 'Apologia Pro Poemate Meo'. Perhaps it might have been less misleading to have organised the sequence in this edition according to first drafting. Another problem in using this *variorum* edition is that sometimes the numbers of the poems/fragments are missing (for example, numbers 17, 23 and 29). In the case of the untitled fragments, any omission of a number makes it difficult to tell where one fragment ends and another begins.

So, are these two expensive volumes of much use to anyone apart from the academic specialist or Owen collector? Despite my serious cavils, Professor Stallworthy, in editing Owen's extant poetry with system and dedication, has brought together much up-to-date scholarship on Owen, though many non-specialist readers might prefer to make do with Hibberd's inexpensive but soundly edited selection of Owen, *War Poems and Others* (1973). If, to some *NS* readers, Stallworthy's handsome compilation is a sign that Owen's wild but eloquent poetry has been tamed by 'the establishment', we also have to acknowledge that this monument is a tribute to the Shakespearean quality and permanence of Owen's greatest poetry, such as these lines from 'Strange Meeting':

> I mean the truth untold,
> The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
> Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
> Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.
> They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress.
> None will break ranks though nations trek from progress.

The women of Greenham Common must appreciate these lines — a revelation of our 20th-century failure. And those 'tigresses' of both sexes who, in the daily Press and on TV, mock the Greenham Commoners might learn from Owen, if they were not so enamoured of their own swift conformity. □

POETRY — 3
John Lucas

Truth, dare, slush or promise?

H.D. Collected Poems
ed. LOUIS L. MARTZ *Carcanet* £16.95
Powers of Thirteen
JOHN HOLLANDER *Secker* £5.95
Jumping the Train Tracks with Angela
PAUL DURCAN *Raven Arts Press/Carcanet New Press* £4.50
Here I Am There You Are Where Were We
TOM DISCH *Hutchinson* £4.95
Against a Setting Sun
RONALD BOTTRALL *Allison & Busby* £4.95
A Lifelong House
LOTTE KRAMER *Hippopotamus Press* £3.90
By the Fisheries
JEREMY REED *Cape* £4
Lost and Found
HARRY GUEST *Anvil Press* £4.95

It's long been accepted that H.D. (Hilda Dolittle) has a place in any history of Imagism. She was for a while married to Richard Aldington, she was friendly with Pound and Lawrence, and she contributed poems to the key anthologies. But, if we are to believe Louis Martz, she needed imagism in the way that a dyspeptic needs Rennies. Its doctrines apparently 'provided H.D. with a discipline that enabled her to control the surges that arose from the depths of her violently responsive nature'. One such surge occurred when she was caught in a thunderstorm. 'Hilda sat down in the grass at the edge of the hill and let it come. "Come, beautiful rain," she said, holding out her arms. "Beautiful rain, welcome." ' Faced with this kind of thing it's difficult to know

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quite where to look. At the poetry, perhaps? 'Life is radiant/life is made for beautiful love/ and strange ecstasy.' The present volume runs to well over 600 pages and most of them are taken up with what can at best be called ineffable waffle. Carcanet promise another volume in order 'to complete the oeuvre'. Help!

It should be obvious that the only way to safeguard H.D.'s reputation is by making a *very* rigorous selection from her outpourings. Early on, she did write one or two imagist-y poems that deserve to see the light of day. (They mostly have, of course.) But Martz, whose introduction is a masterpiece of how not to do it, clearly thinks that everything she wrote should be kept for posterity. 'Beautiful and significant' are two of his more moderate terms of praise for her, and in one of several coy references to what I imagine he wishes us to understand is a love that dare not speak its name, he claims that in reading her love poetry 'one thinks of Lawrence and Shakespeare, in the sonnets'. Oh no, one doesn't. The truth of the matter is that the vast bulk of H.D.'s work is the kind of poetry that gives poetry a bad name.

So, in a different sense, is **Powers of Thirteen**. According to the blurb 'the mathematics of John Hollander's new sequence of poems works out as 169 (13×13) 13-line poems written in 13-syllable lines. But the powers are imaginative and mythical, as well as exponential'. Blurb-writers are no doubt paid to do the best they can for a book, but this will never do. For one thing it's factually wrong. Hollander doesn't even keep to his own game rules. There are examples of 14-syllable lines on pp. 4, 66, 90 and 91. Not much to hang a man for I agree, and on previous occasions Hollander has shown himself a good games-player, as anyone will know who's read his ingenious and entertaining poetry handbook, *Rhyme's Reason*. But the ingenuity of *The Powers of Thirteen* is simply perverse. What on earth is the point of trying to stick to a 13-syllable line if it means that you produce broken-backed, cloddish rhythms and ragged line-endings in which 'of', 'at', 'and', 'that' make frequent appearances simply because they complete the syllable-count? Yes, there are one or two tolerable poems scattered among the wreckage, but for the most part Hollander's book is a quite infuriating example of academic jokiness which comes complete with footnotes and knowing allusions which will produce a groan in those who spot them and blank boredom in the rest.

It's the rest that Paul Durcan is surely after? **Jumping the Train Tracks With Angela** is, as the title suggests, on the manic side, but it's a good read. Durcan goes in for ballads which forget to be ballads and he also has a line of monologue which gives the impression sometimes of Stevie Smith imitating Damon Runyan, sometimes of one of Beckett's clowns in a more than usually desperate search for a listener. There are a great many jokes, of which the good ones are good and the bad ones are even better. In other words, Durcan has a professional rogue-ishness about him. He keeps an eye on his audience to make sure it isn't getting restless, and this inevitably limits his satiric thrusts at contemporary Irish matters. Still, 'The Problem of Fornication in the Blarney Chronicle' is a rough beast with a bite, and the same is true of a handful of others from the same pack. They aren't poems, more anti-poems, but if Hollander and H.D. define poetry I'll choose Durcan.

They don't, of course, as Tom Disch is here to remind us. I was a bit churlish about his previous volume, *Burn This*, and I wish I could make amends over his new book. Unfortunately **Here I Am . . .** isn't very good, even if it is the Poetry Book Society Choice. There are some excellent lines, one of my favourites being the description of a clarinet which 'burbles like a spring of Beaujolais', and Disch nearly always comes up with a neat, polished job of work. But the smoothness of the craft can't disguise the thinness of his material. Writing about a derelict he says: 'From between your legs/A sinuous stream of beer or piss/Follows the line of least resistance,/The course you follow too.' It's altogether too easy, too planted. Besides, how does Disch know the derelict's following any such line? This is pre-Raphaelite moralising sentimentality got up to look new. I can see why magazine editors will like him. Read any one of his poems and you think what a clever man he is. Read several and you begin to see that clever is *all* he is.

Exactly the opposite is true of Ronald Bottrall. At first glance a Bottrall poem can look so bad that you wonder how it ever managed to get into print. In 'Soccer' he speaks about 'The frustration of spectators/Unable to satisfy their sadism,//The mayhem they wish to commit/ Against fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters,/ Neighbours. Accurate bottle-throwers/Are in great demand.' Admittedly soccer has fallen on hard times, but does it deserve this? But then you begin to see that in his plain, drab way Bottrall has an odd knack of telling the truth and that he actually says things about people, places and events which you are either glad to know or forced to agree with. Individual poems can be plain awful. Yet, as Martin Seymour Smith implies in his introduction, if you read the volume through, you come to accept that the whole is much more impressive than the parts. Scrap the would-be lyricism, forget about Bottrall's claim that what matters most to him is 'the budding of images that grow into words/In their most fitting form' (his images are usually trite or dull). The fact is that you are still left with something that in its humdrum, prosaic way insists on being truthful, sometimes witty, inquisitive, even wise. I can't establish this by quotation because *any* quotation will make Bottrall look bad, laughably so. But for all its faults **Against a Setting Sun** isn't to be despised.

Nor is **A Lifelong House**. Lotte Kramer is sensitive, decent, caring. But she lacks memorability. The rhythms aren't *quite* taut enough, the language not *quite* precise or surprising enough — with one exception. In 'Transmutations', she is pulled to the edge of a field by the animal smell of a hawthorn hedge:

> It is older than
> This white blossom's name
> In the shrub's tight leaves, like crosses.
>
> Shadows are deepening
> In the late sun's light
> Sharpening each thorn to a dark nail,
>
> And almost with fear
> I touch the full bough:
> It spills ashes, blinding my shoes.

It may be that the full force of this poem can make its impact only when you know that Lotte Kramer came as a child to England in 1939, and that many of her poems are about the holocaust. But I hope not. Other poems are about family and friends, a few are about art. These latter in particular seem to me to be a mistake. After all, what comment on Otto Dix's portrait of Sylvia Von Harden can possibly be equal to the original?

The same sort of question arises in **By The Fisheries** with Jeremy Reed's poem, 'John Clare's Journal'. If you want to know that it was like being John Clare the best way to find out is by reading the journal and his own wonderful poems. Reed is drawn to literary unfortunates: apart from Clare there's a poem about the Person from Porlock, one about 'Christopher Smart in Madness' ('Let Peter rejoice with the white moon fish/that's radiant in the dark' — same comment: if you want to know what it was like being Christopher Smart in his madness, read *Jubilate Agno*). Reed does better when he directs his attention to the outer world, as in 'Tulips', 'Storm' and 'Snail' and, although he's a clumsy writer whose sense of rhythm is to my ear frequently awry, his curiosity and attentiveness are valuable qualities. And he is not often boring.

Harry Guest is not often anything else. **Lost and Found** is the most tedious, mimsyish, self-regarding, jaw-cracking-yawn-making book of poems I've read for a very long time. Guest has a poem on 'Brutus in his Orchard' which notes that 'The trees hang heavy in the dark. An owl's note shivers from the distance.' Why doesn't he tell us that somewhere a dog barked? It would be more original than the thoughts he gives to Brutus. 'I am not I. And nowhere. Am a process of thought lost in the darkness . . . .' If you want to know about Brutus read Plutarch, Shakespeare or Roy Fuller's fine poem. □

Among this week's contributors:

JON COOK teaches in the School of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia. He is the co-author of *Romanticism and Ideology*.

JOHN LUCAS is Professor of English at Loughborough University. His books include *The Melancholy Man: A Study of Dickens' Novels* and *The Literature of Change*.

TONY HARRISON's collections of poems include *The Loiners*, *Voortrekker* and *Continuous*. His most recent dramatic translation, of the *Oresteia*, was produced at the National Theatre in 1981.

FRANK ORMSBY edits the *Honest Ulsterman*. His collections include *A Store of Candles* and *Being Walked by a Dog*.

JOHN SPURLING is also playwright (most recent plays *The History of the British Empire Parts I and II*), literary critic (most recent publication *Graham Greene*) and purchaser of pictures for the Arts Council.

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Townscapes

The Stories of Bernard Malamud
Chatto £12.50
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BOTHO STRAUSS *Carcanet* £7.95
Modern Baptists
JAMES WILCOX *Secker* £7.95
Sunrising
DAVID COOK *Secker* £8.50

'Well-Americanized' is the highest praise that Bernard Malamud's Jewish marriage broker can confer upon the family of a potential spouse. The impact of this process of Americanisation upon Malamud's own career is outlined in the preface to his 25 selected **Stories**, produced in as many years of teaching and travel. Sure enough, the signs are here: a characteristic American willingness to satisfy curiosity; to give a straight answer to such questions as 'How did you start? What did you earn?'; to dispense advice to tyros: 'Uphold standards. The best endures in the accomplishment of the masters'; to congratulate all concerned, from his wife to his agent.

A successful author's report on how he found happiness and made fiction pay is perhaps a fitting introduction to haunting, harrowing, ironic tales in which everyone worries about survival and subsistence. In New York, European refugees cling to their tenement lodgings like birds to a cliff face, their only defence the power of flight. The old, borrowers and lenders alike, bakers, cobblers, tailors and janitors are marked by toil and inured to pain. The cleaner's feet ache. The fur-cutter has arthritic hands. The grocer's heart flutters at the sight of the new supermarket next door. In an ageing world of high repair costs, both for bodies and buildings, the young are anxious not to waste time. Girls wait desperately for suitors, or, ignoring the pleas of pious parents, plunge into promiscuity.

Love comes, if at all, as a crushing blow, yet, paradoxically, restores hope. Most of Malamud's epiphanies reveal value in what has been despised. An importunate intruder, once gone, is ardently sought. Neighbours, we realise, are worth more than their goods will fetch, more than they owe, more than the price of a tombstone. When a science teacher squeamishly regards the arms of a retarded teenager as 'meaty', we guess that this creature is to be especially cherished. The lucidity of the mad is a reproach to the sane. Losers speak the punchlines. Significantly, 'Idiots First' was the blunt title chosen by Malamud for an earlier collection which contained five of the stories included here (still in print in Penguin, paupers may care to note).

While Malamud's Jews endure rejection and insults with stoically bowed heads, an old Nazi in Botho Strauss's **Tumult** (*Rumor* in the original German) broods on the possibility of death by humiliation; a fatal seizure resulting from outraged pride. Having grown up in the shadow of the Major's chagrin, his stepson Bekker, now in his mid-40s, tries in vain to escape its influence. Racked with loathing for his boss at the Institute for News and Information, he takes the opportunity of a radio broadcast to denounce him along with the ravening hordes who invade the Fatherland from the South: witness the group of Pakistanis whose trust he wins and betrays. Meanwhile, the sullen yet solicitous daughter, with whom he lives and to whom he is incestuously drawn, develops a disabling illness. . .

The cinematic fluency of Michael Hulse's translation commands attention even when it's not clear where the images come from or to whom the voices are addressed. Most of the monstrous urban vistas, encounters with strangers and hectic hangovers are Bekker's own. A colleague extols his 'flaring intelligence'; to his daughter, his ambition seems 'absolutely evil'. Either way, his vituperative presence creates a sombre, disquieting effect.

In Tula Springs, Louisiana, the setting of James Wilcox's inspired comedy **Modern Baptists**, rage, revenge and impulsive gestures only make things worse. Bobby Picken, assistant manager at the Sonnyboy Bargain Store, is a law-abiding, truth-telling bachelor who nevertheless finds himself perpetually on the verge of getting arrested. Regular attendance at the Jubilee Men's Bible Study Group notwithstanding, the idea of Heaven scares him just as much as Hell. There is further cause for alarm in the arrival on parole of his handsome half-brother, F.X., who dreams of being an actor and lands the role of Father Christmas.

'Mother, can you be real for a minute?' demands Donna Lee, a radical lawyer who transforms each client's existence. Her strenuous visit home epitomises the exquisite incompatibility to be found in most relationships. Kinship, friendship, employment and romance. Everyone in this Southern backwater is as real as can be. Plans misfire, misunderstandings multiply, couples collide and collapse in an exuberant choreography of interpersonal chaos that leaves no one seriously hurt.

When a writer as skilled and well-intentioned as David Cook publishes a novel like **Sunrising** it elicits the sort of embarrassed condolence that might greet a tenor with laryngitis. The year is 1830 and rick-burnings and machine-breaking are rife, as Cath and her lover journey through the Midlands in search of work. When John is falsely accused of arson and hanged, Cath joins two young lads (who can be lost and then looked for, over and over again, to eke out the chapters) and all three reach London in time to get involved with the white slave trade and the newly formed Metropolitan Police. Plenty of corpses, street cries and clattering carriage wheels would doubtless work wonders in those semi-improvised scenes with which actors enliven educational visits to historic sites. But *Sunrising* is all background; scarcely a trace survives of imagined passion or the authentic testimony that Cook must have come across in his researches. 'As for this litel fire,' wrote some anonymous parishioners to a property-owning vicar in 1830, 'don't be alarmed it will be a damd deal wors when we burn down your barn'. □

Income distribution and economic development: An analytical survey

by J. Lecaillon, F. Paukert, C. Morrisson and D. Germidis

The role of income distribution in economic growth is a difficult and controversial question, which since the Second World War has received much attention with regard to the developing countries in particular. A general trend in the relation between income inequality and economic development was identified by Simon Kuznets, who saw inequality as first increasing and then decreasing in the course of economic development. This book sums up the results of research carried out over the past decade and more. On the basis of a more rigorous statistical method (that confirms the general validity of Kuznet's thesis), it traces the effect on employment and incomes of the dualistic structure of economy in developing countries and the effective scope for use of fiscal policy, government expenditure and other measures in reducing inequality as development proceeds.
ISBN 92-2-103559-X (hard cover) £11.40
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Sylvia Kantaris

Creil

Just factories and backs of shabby houses
strung along the railway-track —
the kind of place you wouldn't even notice,
speeding through from Paris to Boulogne
with coffee and long ham-sandwiches,
except for one old woman on crutches
standing in a doorway watching
one more train passing. Creil.
After that, for us, the fog, the hovercraft
and more fog all the way to London,
then the last lap in the Golden Hind
with crowds, beer, BR sandwiches,
even wine — as far as Exeter —
and later just a debris of maxpax,
cellophane and rolling bottles.
I feel sorry for the people who get on at Plymouth.
On the rack, the labels on our little bags
announce that we have been to Paris.
We have our clear and childlike memories
to store against the merging days ahead.
The journey back is largely a blur
except for one old woman, framed, on crutches,
watching our *rapide* sweep out of sight,
who looked as if she might have been at home there
at a grey place with a name like a slate.

Frank Ormsby

The convoy

Miss McCamley's Raleigh toils uphill,
the handlebars unsteerable with shopping.
She slumps on a stone with barely breath to wheeze
'I'm not worth thruppence. God, I haven't a puff',
shields the third match and lights a tiny dune
of Potter's Asthma Remedy.
A hiss of pungent smoke, a wincing sound.
The convoy passes.

Thomas McCarthy

Winter

Learning to keep you warm is a fair fight:
Which is more than I can say for the night
Outside, that bitter night at our window.
After three cold weeks I'd like you to know
How much I enjoy you when you are cold
But longing to travel on the linen veldt
With me. Though you like to be your own guide
On those lovely and critical campaigns,
With a gallant blue hot-water bottle
Like a *cicisbeo* at your cottoned side.

Tony Harrison

Rubbish

All my rubbish gets discreetly bagged,
some, heavy with indulgence, some lightweight;
some sail through the air, some get half-dragged
clinking, down to the gap that was the gate,
and I don't move when roofers fix my tiles
or when the builder comes to point a wall,
with the window cleaner I trade nods and smiles
and don't budge from my littered desk at all,
so why, when two men cross my threadbare lawn
each Monday morning emptying my bins,
as if my refuse was exposed to scorn,
my garbage a glaring index to my sins,
do I bolt from my study and go hide?

I think the reason is I can't abide
being caught, pen in hand, while gloved men chuck
black plastic sacks of old drafts on their truck.

Stephen Knight

The diving board

As Achilles lolls beside the pool
In dappled bermuda shorts, he sips
Gin and orange juice from a tumbler
And strums the water's tuneless surface
With a pilose, tanned paw. Fish gather.

His white, athletic wife is bouncing
On the diving board. Two face-lifts old,
Her skin is stretched like canvas across
A frame of unexceptional bone:
A picture of health by Picasso.

His stationary manner annoys her,
She hectors him and keeps herself trim
With aerobics. Achilles has laced
The deep end with barracuda, he
Believes in living dangerously.

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DANCE
Stephanie Jordan

The sex 'n' violence formula

Royal Ballet
Covent Garden

Hollywood likes remakes and so does Kenneth MacMillan; his output is full of them. While the purpose of making new versions of movies is to apply up-to-date technology and contemporary acting in an already proven framework, it is unclear why MacMillan has chosen some of his more recent themes: *Isadora, The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* (as *Valley of Shadows*) and now *Woyzeck*. In each case, the limitations of dance theatre require either knowledge of the original or disregard for it. If, in MacMillan's defence, you argue that Verdi trivialised Shakespeare, Hugo and Schiller, but created great opera, then MacMillan's contribution to ballet must be judged purely in terms of the art form itself.

Different Drummer derives its title from Thoreau, a reference to the idea that, if people are not the same as you and me, they are still all right, just marching to a different tempo. This thought MacMillan has applied to Georg Büchner's unfinished play (most familiar to international audiences via Berg's *Wozzeck*) based on the real-life incident of a soldier who murdered his wife, presumably a *cause célèbre* of the 1820s. The play proposed the then no doubt unacceptably radical suggestion that a man who is, by lack of education, incapable of articulating his feelings will resort to violence. This he does against his common-law wife Marie for having committed fornication with the preposterously vain Drum Major and, subsequently, against himself in suicide. His plight is worsened by a doctor who offers him much needed money to act as guinea pig for quack experiments. The form of Büchner's play is non-developmental, fragmentary and dispassionate, the bleakness of the situation visible through the gaps, the tragedy reaching beyond the personal to evoke a sense of social injustice. By enlisting Thoreau's plea for the rights of the individual conscience, MacMillan evades Büchner's liberalism. Rather than the power of the officer and the educated over the subordinate, the hero merely suffers from regimental discipline and fatigues, his soul crying out for release — as is the sensual Marie, from the bondage of sordid home and motherhood. An apparently unscheduled lack of sets could be seen as an attempt at universality of message.

As for art, what in fact always interests MacMillan most is the mixture of sex and blood in a cruel environment bespattered with the sinister and the hostile. Therefore, his response to his subject matter is usually, obsessively, to the same effect. The poignant ending of the play and the opera, demonstrating the surrounding desolation and the loneliness of the orphan, has been discarded by MacMillan. Despite mannerisms — the Captain (David Drew) stiff-backed and strutting; the insidious Doctor (Jonathan Burrows) dressed as a nurse (to look really sinister?); Marie (Alessandra Ferri) overheated and crossing her legs into knots — once the characters are set in motion, little difference exists in their behaviour whether they are happy or tormented. A slick of energy spills out over everything; reckless spins and twists and rolls and foot-stubbing. Woyzeck (Wayne Eagling) perhaps spends more time grovelling on the floor than the others. The corps of soldiers bears an occasional odd resemblance to classical unison and formation, with bayonets and goose-stepping, or executing a series of smart *grands jetés* across the stage.

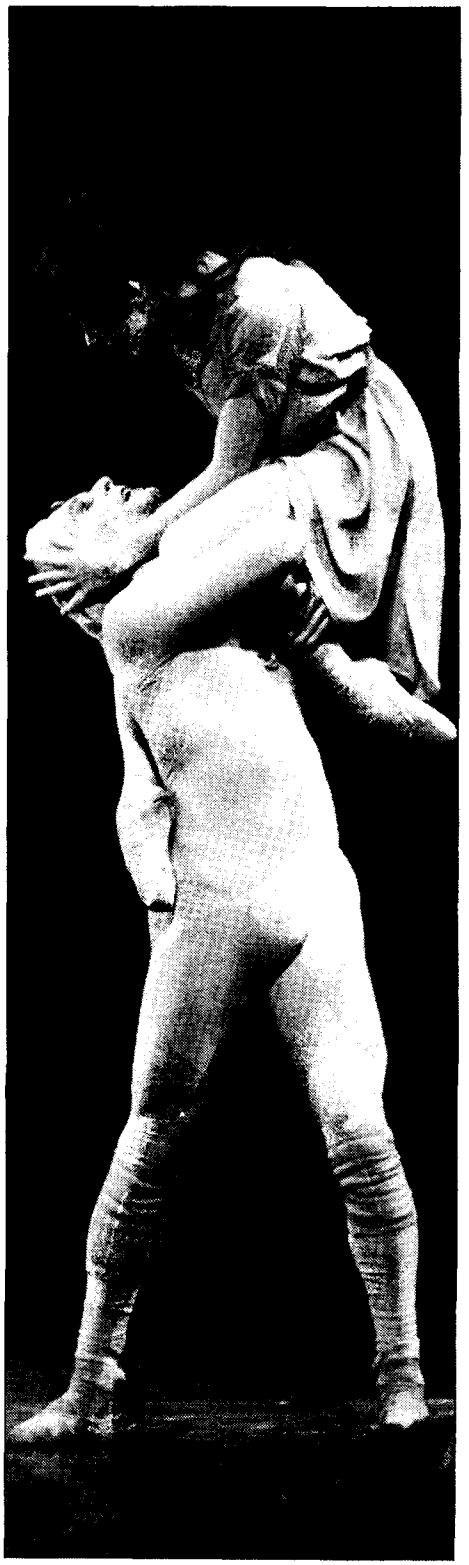
It was very thoughtful of Webern to provide his *Passacaglia* Opus 1 and Schönberg his *Verklärte Nacht* to fit end-to-end so conveniently into MacMillan's scenario. The final major key transfiguration must have provided a headache, solved by uniting Marie and Woyzeck in a sentimental show of heavenly love (the physical interactions much as before) and, ironically, their corpses wheeled on stretchers across the stage by Captain and Doctor.

It is hardly possible to claim that any of the cast was particularly adept or inept in any role; simpler to say that they all worked like mad on a piece that degrades their skill. Perhaps most disturbing is that Ferri, who is gaining a reputation as MacMillan's new muse, is not used to the extent of her abilities in the works that he has actually created for her. Right now, it looks dangerously as if it is her destiny to be the beautiful, Italian, passionate, just-do-anything-you-like-with-me sort of ballerina.

If some people still think that going to the ballet is only about seeing *Swan Lake*, I hope that this is not the ballet they choose to see as an antidote. Or the programme, for that matter: lugubrious, ending with MacMillan's **Song of the Earth**, a great lumbering construction. Robbins's **Afternoon of a Faun**, danced exquisitely by Bryony Brind and Ashley Page, gave us a few moments of opening hope, but then an interval and on into the abyss.

WHILE FERRI is being shot into some kind of dubious stardom, other young RB dancers are working less conspicuously, soundly navigating the shores of the Ashton repertory and the classics. As the repertoire stands today, it is success in these areas that gives a better measure of the standards of the company.

Elisabeth Platel, guest from the Paris Opera Ballet, performing in **Swan Lake** is in some respects an example of what our own dancers as young as her have not acquired. Platel has some of the qualities that we admire in a fully fledged classical ballerina: a beautiful, neat physique, a supple back, strong, high legs, a thrilling quality frozen in stillness, assurance, a bravura gift, with some brilliant *fouetté* turns (double as well as single) at the climax of her Black Swan solo. She is certainly much closer to that image than most other dancers from her school. But she is also flashy, with sharp, throwaway gestures that lack consideration for Tchaikovsky, a habit that suddenly diminishes her presence and turns her into a brittle, unyielding creature. It is unnerving to see such mannerisms in one so young and talented.



AlessandraFerri (with Wayne Eagling): a muse in danger of crashing.

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She fared best as Petipa's Black Swan, but brought to the part no sense of enveloping danger; neither did she bring pathos to Odette, to Ivanov's Act 2, which extends the romantic, personal limits of 19th-century classicism and contrasts acutely with the extrovert grandeur of the alternating Petipa.

Jay Jolley, replacing the injured Charles Jude, is game but has no artistic bearing and the rest of the company appeared out of spirits in a tired old production. The most exhilarating dancing of the evening was the Act 3 *pas de quatre* danced by Karen Paisey, Ravenna Tucker, Stephen Sheriff and Bruce Sansom.

Sansom and Paisey were back in prominence for their debuts in **La Fille mal gardée.** Sansom, just 18 months in the company, is one of its most pleasant surprises for a long time. He danced Colas for a Royal Ballet School performance; Alston spotted him for *Midsummer* recently. Already, he is an engaging personality on stage, considerate but not over-effusive as a partner, confident technically, a light dancer with a clean line and relaxed carriage. His is a rather straight version of a role with much comic potential, but this matches well Paisey's vulnerable, teenage interpretation. Together, they make it clear that this ballet is about a young, wilful couple surmounting various hurdles to claim one another. Guy Niblett was more extrovert than sympathetic in his account of the wealthy but unlucky simpleton, Alain. □

TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Raree show

THERE IS something embarrassing and therefore 'televisual' about a marriage. I'm not talking about the wedding end of the arrangement, the frilly, down-market, *This is Your Life*-type paroxysm in the coach annexe, but that which trails after it through train journeys, dentist's appointments, parents' days, family holidays and estrangements — embarrassing because each partner in it is a reflection of the other one's helplessness in the world and to look at one is to see the other turned inside out, all his or her failures and doubts laid out on a piece of polythene — one wellie and a used razor blade — like those poor sellers-of-everything-they-own who squat on the pavement in Brick Lane on Sunday mornings.

When we see a marriage going somewhere on the tube, its two faces worn away by looking at each other, its clambering progeny an unsightly compromise with what might have been, we have to look away, as if we have caught someone dying, or being sick. The spectacle has a horrible fascination, as when a friend's poems are rejected for publication. It is a fascination that has been brilliantly exploited by the discreetly invisible John Pitman in **The Other Half** (BBC-1).

The traditional TV and Sunday-paper excuse for looking inside other people's bandages is that it encourages those who are similarly afflicted. In the case of Gillian Lynne (52), director of the musical *Cats*, and her unknown New Zealand actor husband Peter Land (30) it was 'to try and get Peter's career off the ground' by plugging the old age-difference angle. It is not an easy time for Peter, we learnt, because Gillian has never been in greater demand and has to bring work home in order to spend time with her wistful husband and the video, while Peter takes singing lessons and sits by the phone, which rings for her from LA. 'Sometimes I have great self-doubt,' said Peter. 'I am going through a period of low ambition at the moment.' Gillian, on the other hand, 'has this image that one day he will put me out to grass at the end of the estate and I'll have to watch him go off with someone younger'. You'll notice who keeps the estate, however. Gillian may be 'out to grass' but it's her grass she's out to. I'd look into that if I was Peter.

'Were you good at your job of torturer?' asked another invisible enquirer in Everyman's **Making of a Torturer** (BBC-1). 'Yes, I think I was good,' said Michaelis Petrou, a superstar of the Junta's 'kapsoni' method of training men as torturers.

> An important factor was your uncertainty as to why you were being submitted to such brutality and how long it was to go on. But after a while you were treated well, told you were a leader of the state and you could go out and eat and drink without paying for it. A tea-party was when we got together to beat up someone.

We met a man who had lost the power of speech and his right arm following such hospitality. In sign language and noises he said he would like to kill slowly his tormenter. He could only make one sound, 'Falaga'. Amnesty International believes that the process by which soldiers are turned into torturers is common to 2/3 of the UN member states.

Yet another equivalent of the Victorian freak-show was cleverly disguised as an edition of **One Pair of Eyes** (BBC-2) — 'Because of an accident at birth Simon Trehearne is mentally handicapped' — the only difference being that nowadays Simon is encouraged to try to act and speak like an ordinary person, on television, so we can enjoy the difference. He wasn't as different as his friend Alasdair, however. Alasdair is a schoolmasterly type with a trick of addressing the air on lofty topics such as the stars, then lamenting the fact that nobody loves him. Alasdair's room was a marvel. It looked like that of a scatter-brained literary type who had fallen about seven years behind on his reviewing. Books burst from cupboards and paper bags. 'Don't finger that bag of books please,' he told his benefactor Simon. 'That bag of books will be dealt with when the time comes for it to be dealt with.'

I suppose his tone mimicked an earlier benefactor. 'My mother died when I was five,' he told a neighbour couple who had come to complain about rubbish building up. 'My father died when I was 26. I have never had anyone to love and I am *longing* to find someone whose life I can share and relate to and who would love me. Once I have found a suitable girlfriend I think we shall have a very nice life together here and going on trips.' The old couple retired, totally out of their depth in Alasdair's air of passionate exhortation. 'Alasdair's problem,' said someone, is that he would rather read books while someone else cleans the bath.' Which was when you got the idea that Alasdair wasn't as handicapped as he looked.

'I hadn't been out of the army a week when I met with an accident that completely severed my optic nerve,' said a man on **Pigeons — Queer Facts** (BBC-2).

> Pigeons have made a very good job of my blind life. I hammered their cage till four in the morning, quite unconscious that darkness had come down. When I hear the flutter of wings, the heart thumps and the mouth dries. I was stupefied by the incomprehensible belief that I had won the Pigeon Grand National.

One genial fancier swore that pigeons have regional accents and failed to prove as much with the aid of an oscilloscope, pigeons and mimicry. Another used a matchbox to file off the beaks of his aptly named 'short-faced' breed. 'I will just demonstrate the cropper bird,' he said. 'We have to teach it to blow out its crop, like this.' He blew down a bird's throat and its crop did indeed enlarge to a grotesque degree. 'This is not illegal,' he said sheepishly. 'We are all doing it.' He let the bird go and it fled round the room like a balloon. □

ART
John Spurling

Oh dear Tate

Gallery of New Art
and **The Kessler Bequest**
Tate
John Hubbard
Fischer Fine Art

I sometimes feel that the Tate is rather like the Soviet Union. If we could all be gentler and kinder to it, overlook its grave shortcomings and draw attention only to its loveable characteristics, it might come in out of the cold, actually begin to be more loveable. What courage, dear Tate, it must have taken, in spite of your public critics and critical public, to set aside your largest single gallery for the display of new art! How admirable to follow up last year's disastrous *New Art at the Tate* exhibition by buying several of the exhibits and proudly re-displaying them, so that those who jeered then can look again and perhaps see the light at this second opportunity! Where would we all be without your hawk-eyed curators scanning the international scene for every little trend that stirs and pouncing on our behalf, in order to spare us, in years to come, the ignominy of not having acquired a Salle or a Longo, a Baselitz or a Clemente when prices were still . . . well . . . realistic?

I can't keep this up. What they've bought is frankly appalling, as varied and monumental a collection of basement-destined art as was ever foisted on this notoriously unlucky branch of the civil service. The consistency seems at first

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surprising. What, all huge, all assertive, all macho (even the four panels by the single female artist), all unsubtle (except perhaps Bill Woodrow's guitar cut out of a washing-machine which looks subtle in this company), all self-consciously, vapidly public? Then one reflects that this after all is the point. Anything small, thoughtful, sensitive, slow-burning or privately pleasurable would be out of place here, since these works exist to rebut individual taste, to assert the primacy of an institutional forum in which names, styles and movements count more than content because they can be compared and classified, in which importance can be assessed only by the amount of space consumed, in which what is most immediately noticeable is most successful.

As certain missiles seek heat, these works seek attention. Their sole purpose is to be set up like hoardings in a public gallery, to be glanced at, no matter how briefly, by so many thousand pairs of passing eyes and to secure by their exposure in one museum a still better claim to further exposure for their brand names elsewhere. So, given the conditions of the international art-scene — the overwhelming value of publicity, the commercial considerations of dealers and collectors, the key position held by comparatively few public-funded institutions and their handful of curatorial employees, the ignorance, indifference or bewilderment of the general public and the impotence of critics and trustees — this sort of art is probably inevitable.

There is, however, a simple way out of the imbroglio: to leave the curators to fill historical gaps in the collection and to hire, as the Arts Council does, independent purchasers for contemporary work. It wouldn't avoid mistakes, but it might let a little air and sanity into the system, so long as the purchasers were changed often enough not to be sucked into it. At any rate, I recommend the Tate's trustees and director to make a careful comparison of their contemporary collection with the Arts Council's and see if they are not considerably abashed by the result.

Of course what saves the Tate's collection from looking even more arid than it does are the gifts and bequests of well-wishers. The latest benefaction is sumptuous enough to warrant a catalogue and a small temporary gallery to itself. Mrs A. F. Kessler, who died last year at the age of 93, began collecting in the 1920s. Her bequest consists of 14 paintings and drawings by modern French masters: two Renoirs, two Modiglianis, two Picassos, a Daumier and a Toulouse-Lautrec, four Dufys and a Degas pastel of a woman drying herself in a tub, one of the two masterpieces of the gift. The other is a Dufy belonging to the same group of Normandy harvest scenes as the magnificent *'Le Grand Champ de Blé'* which was included in the recent Dufy exhibition at the Hayward. Mrs Kessler's version, 'The Harvest', is a more solid, gathered composition than the other, with an intense blue sky and brilliant stripes of orange and yellow just below the horizon. It is a painting at the top of Dufy's form — the real and the ideal, the mundane and the exotic perfectly balanced through colour and design.

Such a rhapsodic response to nature hardly seems possible any more. Yet John Hubbard's exhibition of abstract landscapes — some deriving from a visit to the Vaucluse, others from the semi-tropical gardens at Abbotsbury in Dorset — proves that it is. Nature acts for him as a kind of emotional cinema screen on which the originally objective forms and colours become subjective transformations. You can read these paintings neither simply as landscapes nor as brush-strokes, but must take both together and experience them almost as the artist did, in process, slowing down here, exploding there, diving through towards a glimpse of space, coming up short against dense masses of tangled colour. Of course he himself went to work in reverse, building up from behind what you explore from in front, so that what he finally arrives at is what you start from, but the point of meeting between artist and viewer, just as between artist and landscape, is really halfway through the layers, when you understand what a landscape feels like through a brush loaded with paint. Hubbard has seldom painted so freely or so authoritatively before. One can only hope that some philanthropist is buying them to leave to the Tate in about 50 years' time, when all those basements are bursting at the seams and it turns out they've missed everything worth having once again. □

FILMS
Mary Harron

Sob stories

The Right Stuff (15)
Warner, West End; ABC Fulham Road
Christine (18)
Leicester Square Theatre
Street Fleet (15)
Plaza

Until Tom Wolfe wrote *The Right Stuff,* astronauts were the most faceless of American heroes. The drama of the space race did grip the public imagination, but the astronauts seemed less like men than plastic Action Men, dressed in silver suits and placed and sealed inside their capsules by the scientists of Cape Canaveral. Their public utterances were earnest, patriotic and so predictably squeaky clean that they seemed to have been scripted by White House consultants, which indeed they were. People need a little more sweat and devilry in their heroes and Wolfe has done the government and the military a service: he both humanised the astronauts and added a misty notion of bravery and heroism — 'the right stuff' — to reclaim them as the stuff of American legend.

Philip Kaufman's film, a beautifully faithful adaptation, could not have been made in the Seventies. It was necessary for the sting of failure in Vietnam and the hostility to the military industrial complex to fade; now America is looking back to the Kennedy era as its last golden age and is ready (in spite of Lebanon) to see men in uniform as heroes again.

As in the book, the real hero of **The Right Stuff** is not an astronaut but a test pilot, Chuck Yeager (played by playwright Sam Shepard), who broke the sound barrier in the late Forties. We first see Yeager riding through the desert on a horse, as the Last American Cowboy in an age when the sky was seen as the last frontier. Schoolboy romanticism, of course, but Yeager's flights are the most moving scenes in the picture; after a few minutes of stirring music, shots of a man alone in the wide dusty plains and a silver bird streaking through the air, tears were pouring from my eyes. As for Shepard, you couldn't ask for a better hero: with eyes made for looking into distances, he's all Gary Cooper awkwardness, farm-boy simplicity and stern but tender heroism.

If the film's nostalgia for the Old Frontier is undiluted, the vision of Kennedy's New Frontier is more ironic. Kaufman makes a very adept transition from post-war to Cold War to the optimism and razmataz of the false dawn of the early Sixties. The wife's role doesn't change; this is pre-feminism, and she remains a home-maker in a little print dress, having coffee mornings and suffering privately over her man. But gradually the air-force base is invaded by dark-suited Eisenhower bureaucrats. The film tells us that the space programme killed the era of the Cowboy of the Air; Yeager is rejected as an astronaut because he didn't go to college, and the Space Programme is staffed with more malleable career men.

Yeager and his friends dismissed the astronaut's role as being 'spam in a can': not pilots, but guinea pigs. The film acknowledges that these men were pawns in the Cold War propaganda game by rather crudely burlesquing the White House officials and scientific boffins in charge. The effect is to throw sympathy back on the astronauts, with their pilots' wounded pride, marriage problems and rivalry. The antagonisms within the group, particularly towards John Glenn, are dealt with glibly, as many pages of tension are reduced to a 90-second argument and magic reconciliation. However, there is one great scene at a press conference: the astronauts are struggling to give suitably clean cut answers when suddenly John Glenn begins to speak. Wholesome platitudes pour forth from his shining boy-scout face (Glenn is played by an amazing look-alike, Ed Harris), and his fellow pilots give edgy, side-long glances, baffled by the sight of a future politician at work.

The film ends with a return to Yeager in the desert, and another test flight. But by this point even Yeager has acknowledged that the astronauts, although passive, have 'the right stuff', which in this case means the willingness to undertake a potential suicide mission. As black smoke from a crashed plane billowed over the desert and I wrung out my handkerchief I couldn't repress the suspicion that, for all its complexities, *The Right Stuff* is a brilliant propaganda piece in war movie tradition. As with Wolfe's book, the film makes drama from the astronauts by seeing everything through their eyes, with a nod to the wives at home. The validity of the space programme, its political role and vast expense are never questioned: space travel is good because it gives a man the chance to prove that he has the right stuff.

As an antidote to the celebration of man and machine I can recommend John Carpenter's **Christine**, an elegant little horror movie based on the Stephen King novel. I don't know what happened to Stephen King in high school, but it

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must have been ghastly because, like *Carrie*, this is another tale of teenage vengeance. Arnie (Keith Gordon) is a tremulous, virginal, high-school misfit who falls in love with Christine, who happens to be both a car (a red and white 1958 Plymouth Fury) and a case of demonic possession. Christine, who maimed one man and murdered another while still on the assembly line, is a spirited little thing, able to lock her own doors, repair herself and suffocate passengers she doesn't like. Having taken possession of Arnie's soul she turns him into a high-school swinger and then a vengeful little beast. Several of Arnie's enemies get squashed, but *Christine* is blessedly free of gory images, and it's a nice little satire on American teenage car culture.

Street Fleet is a piece of witless American slapstick based on a rather winning idea: a Washington taxi firm with a fleet of broken-down cabs and a staff of misfits. Making up in hysteria what it lacks in wit, the film has the odd funny line buried in the crashing metal, and a plot that develops like a tapeworm: segments are added just to fill up time. It's as mawkish as it is noisy, and Mr T from *The A Team* is on hand to deliver self-help exhortations: the 'You Gotta Have A Dream' school of dialogue, otherwise known as the *Flashdance* syndrome. I noticed a tear creeping into my eye, but I wiped it away sternly. □

THEATRE
Christopher Edwards

On edge

Boesman and Lena
ATHOL FUGARD *Hampstead*

Athol Fugard now has two plays running in London. *Master Harold and the Boys* is on at the Cottesloe and has been universally acclaimed. I thought it deeply flawed, in that it failed to distance itself from the intensity of what was obviously a powerful personal experience of the playwright, as evidenced by the extract from his *Notebooks* published in the programme. *Boesman and Lena* is a much earlier play — it was written in 1968 and performed in London over ten years ago. The Hampstead programme also has an extract from the *Notebooks*, but here the playwright's imagination has triumphantly created art out of private emotion. My only confusion is as to why the critical response has been so muted — mentioning only the 'Beckettian' elements of Fugard's piece. If there's one thing worse than bleakness, it must be derivative bleakness; I think it only fair to emphasise the power of both the work and the production.

Fugard writes about his native South Africa — this work is set on the banks of the Swartkops River, outside Port Elizabeth. Dermot Hayes's set is simple but adroit: a boat's bleached ribs stuck in the sand and surrounded by washed-up tyres and junk lead you irresistibly to describe the two main characters in similar terms — flotsam and jetsam. Lena (Janet Suzman) and Boesman (Stuart Wilson) stumble on-stage filthy and exhausted. Their slum shack was, we soon learn, bulldozed by the Boers that same morning. They are Coloureds — a sub-species Boesman describes as 'white man's rubbish', although unlike refuse they can't be completely disposed of. When turned out of one slum they stagger on and create another. For the time being, Boesman will make a temporary shelter out of corrugated scrap and hunt about for prawns.

While Boesman builds in resentful silence, Lena talks and it is in *her* speech that Fugard's dramatic style establishes itself. It is a risky technique that he uses, full of an inflated discourse which confronts head-on the 'big' questions of existence in a way which could seem bald and top-heavy. 'I want my life, where is it?' Or, later, when Boesman (drunk and

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Exhibitions

WILLIAM MORRIS
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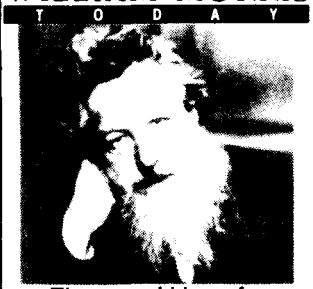

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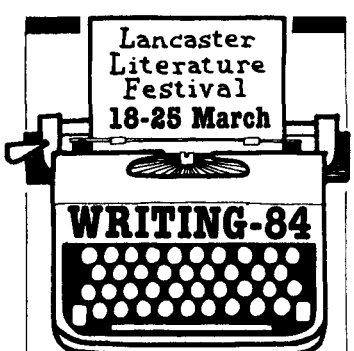

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articulate) talks about freedom: 'Freedom's a long walk.' Fugard also relies heavily on the memory speech to develop narrative line. Lena — speaking in a sense for them both — builds up a sense of desperate questing through a litanised reiteration of place names, of roads she has walked; if she could only arrange them all, she would possess an important key. This obsession with the precise ordering of the past is a familiar and very serviceable device of dramatic intensification and, here, Fugard deploys it persuasively.

From the outer darkness of the mudflats, there stumbles Outa (Tommy Buson), a Kaffir and therefore a member of a sub-species even lower on the scale than Boesman and Lena. Lena treats him charitably and, to protect him from Boesman's violence, puts up valuable security in the form of a bottle of booze. 'No time for apartheid on a night like this.' Boesman's response is to knock the old black down and to glare in uncomprehending outrage as Lena comforts him with caresses and prattles on about her life, even though Outa can only speak some incomprehensible African dialect. In the end, he just dies on them. After Boesman has vented his inarticulate rage on the corpse, he and Lena are obliged to move on.

The acting is superb and technically very accomplished. Wilson expresses a fierce sense of cornered humanity operating at a base instinctual level, while Suzman projects a brittle levity which emerges, suddenly, as a form of desperate courage. The sense that Fugard gives is of a couple on the edge of things. They come across as sharply individual, in a local South African context, as well as representative of their kind. This Hampstead production of Fugard's play is probably the best illustration of why he enjoys a reputation for being both a powerful and an imaginative voice of conscience. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2811 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Extracts, please, from famous love stories (Tristan and Isolde, Heloise and Abelard, whatever) revised to fit into the Mills & Boon list. Max. 130 words, by 16 March.

No 2808 **Set by A. Boteman**

Words heard on stepping over the threshold which make you wish you hadn't come.

Report **By Len the Unlucky**

My turn, She said, because I'd be in sympathy with this one. But, let me tell you, after a few days' immersion in the dreary offcuts of your social lives, I'm beginning to feel like the positive cynosure of high society. 'As you may gather,' said one honest comper, 'I've ventured over a lot of dismal thresholds.' At least we'll know how to make you feel at home should we ever condescend to invite you here again — offer you home-made booze, computer games, anecdotes about operations, contagious diseases, dogs, holiday slides, Mark Thatcher, ex-husbands, rows, drains in need of unblocking, fractious children, sociology professors and videos of *The Thorn Birds*. The simpler the form of the greeting the more chilling; two green ones for each of these nutshell remarks.

Beryl! Another two of your friends!
It's formal, but I'm sure no one will mind that much.
We're teetotal but do go ahead. JOHN BARBER

Ah ha! Our token feminist!
All the children are eating with us tonight . . .
Ben's on *Question Time* tonight — do you mind if we switch on?
Darling, that get-up *will* break the ice! DIANA EDEN

It's not every W.I. that would tackle *Wozzeck*.
. . . a totally new way of touching.
You're Scorpio — *I* just know it.
Come on in — I'm Sebby, Dodo's step-son by her last husband but two.
It's going to be a terribly Iris Murdoch kind of evening. MARTIN FAGG

Darling, do come in. What a shame you missed our party last night. ROBIN CHASE

You mustn't tell Ricky, but we've got this utterly *gross* Fat-Ladygram coming for him this evening . . .
Just the person. Can you tell this bloody husband of mine that a woman does occasionally like to be treated as though she were a human being. GEORGE SIMMERS

Isn't it thrilling? We've managed to get hold of Roman Polanski at last, and he's absolutely longing to meet your daughter. P. M. G. SHIEL

Be with you in a minute. The Special Branch officers are just finishing. MARK AMBROSE

Ah, Nigel. Do come in. Did you hear about Lance? The boy in the flat downstairs you met last time. He's had to go into hospital. AIDS, they think.
Fiona! Get yourself in 'ere girl! Reckon we're in for a fair old bash, this arvo! Bet you've never been the only sheila at an Aussie rugger party before, eh? BARRY BALDWIN

Hello, good evening and welcome. JIM YORKE

I sort of assumed you'd see it in the deaths column. W. S. BROWNLIE

Come in you old sinner. Jim is just off to Upper Volta on his 'Save the Children' stint and we're each offering up a little prayer. G. GOATLEY

Hello. Your husband *is* a solicitor, isn't he? GEORGE COWLEY

Stella *could* make it after all. But I think we'd better keep the conversation away from relationships.
Sorry? Reg and Beth *who*, did you say? N. J. WARBURTON

Go on then! Ask me who's come up in the *New Statesman* competition yet again. DAVID TOLEY

You'll have had your tea, won't you? STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Hi swingers! Just chuck your car keys in that pile over there, would you? PETER NORMAN

. . . since Paul Johnson gave up editing it. WILL BELLENGER

We're having a George Orwell evening. Here's your paper and pencil. MARGARET ROGERS

Sir Geoffrey's in sparkling form tonight. GEOFF HORTON

Thank God you've come. The male stripper's let us down. PETER VEALE

FIRST PERSON

Alison Hennegan

Heads or tales

I SUPPOSE it's not really the sort of thing a good card-carrying lesbian-feminist should say too loudly in this room full of strangers but, these days, I find myself ever more sympathetically mindful of the plight of two early Church Fathers: Jerome, who recognised, sadly but certainly, that he was going to have to give up all that lovely, luscious, pagan Greek stuff — eventually; and Augustine who, in an admittedly different context, said 'But, please Lord, not *yet*.'

Not, you understand, that it's my (precarious) possession of (ever faster fading) Greek which torments my lesbian-feminist soul, even though I was somewhat shaken the other day to be told it was 'élitist' to know classical Greek: not, mark you, to quote it, to refuse to translate it in the footnotes to one's never-to-be-written learned works, or to bring it crashing, *à la* 1884, like a socio-economic bludgeon over the heads of the Unlettered — but just to *know* it.

I regaled a be-Greeked friend with this episode two days later. Expressing disgust but no surprise, she gloomily swopped me an anecdote about a recent feminist writers' conference where some incautious wretch had used the word 'naturalism' in a workshop. She was promptly savaged by an English teacher who said virtuously she didn't know what the word meant and, furthermore, didn't want to. 'I wouldn't have minded so much,' said the friend, stabbing her cannelloni moodily, 'if I'd thought she was telling the truth. But she was a *teacher*, for heaven's sake. Of *course* she knew. And if she *didn't*... well, really!'

And here you have my (and her and possibly your) patristic, indeed patriarchal, dilemma. On one side lies our impure 'pagan' knowledge — the values and demands of the mainstream academic literary establishment ('she *ought* to know what "naturalism" means!') in which we were eagerly and gratefully raised; and, on the other, the promise of salvation offered by feminism long overdue challenge to that same establishment and its deeply cherished, peevishly defended ambivalence (and often downright hostility) to women and feminism.

For those of us uneasily caught in the cross-fire, life becomes an unnerving succession of wobbles, skids and chilly spells in no man's land. Canons to Right of us, canons to Left of us, indeed. 'Let's maintain standards, have a little critical rigour round here,' demands the Establishment piously, via lectures, seminars and publications which examine, or explain why there's no need to examine women's writing. Yet now conveniently (and unrigorously) it neglects to examine the reasons

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for its own obsession with literary league tables and the values which underlie them. 'You don't need any more *rigor*!' yell its opponents. 'You're dead already! Quit the jargon and the stalling — just concentrate on *content*, for God's sake, and *listen* to what you're really saying.'

Most of the time I yell with them. There's enough to yell about. There's under-representation of women writers in university syllabuses. Joanna Russ's *How to Suppress Women's Writing* (to be published by the Women's Press in June) offers statistics which demonstrate that although there's a remarkable variation over the years in the individual women studied, the *proportion* of women remains remarkably constant — about 7 per cent. Terrifying things, statistics. Anthony Burgess includes almost 14 per cent (13.793103 per cent, to be precise) in his recent *Ninety-Nine Novels: The Best in English since 1939* which suggests he's twice as receptive to women's writing as most male critics. Ponder *that* and tremble.

There's under-representation, too, (sometimes to the point of complete invisibility) of books written or reviewed by women in the 'serious' literary journals. And, alarmingly, there's an apparently genuine incapacity on the part of their usually male editors to recognise the fact. One feminist scholar has just completed a statistical analysis of the volume and content of writing by and about women in British literary journals and books pages. She recently asked one male editor about his extremely famous journal's policy on women reviewing and reviewed. He replied earnestly that the problem wasn't getting them *in* but keeping them *out*. Women, he explained, with obvious sincerity, were in danger of taking over and swamping Everything (men?) in sight. The scholar was unsurprised at his response, even though she knew his own paper was one which devoted fewest column inches to women's books, used fewest women reviewers and unfailingly gave feminist books to anti-feminist reviewers (presumably in the name of that terrible trio, Balance, Impartiality and Objectivity).

Oh yes, those pagans have to go, that's clear. And they can take their specious standards, their smug certainties and their embarrassingly transparent terrors with them.

And yet, I find myself asking wistfully, was there *no* virtue in them? For although I disagree constantly and radically with their standards, with how and why they apply them, I too believe in 'standards', do believe it is possible to talk of some books and authors being 'better' than others, do believe that reading with true understanding and pleasure and value demands not only our hearts but our minds.

Demands our intellect, I'll even say, though sadly and angrily aware that today it is most often from the Left that I hear 'intellectual' used as a term of abuse, hear 'anti-intellectual' offered confidently as proof of purity.

One day, perhaps, I'll have to choose: to trail, belatedly, after the pagans, telling myself I'll 'reform from within' (ha!); or stay where I (mainly) feel I belong, alternately apologetic and defiant about my Tendencies.

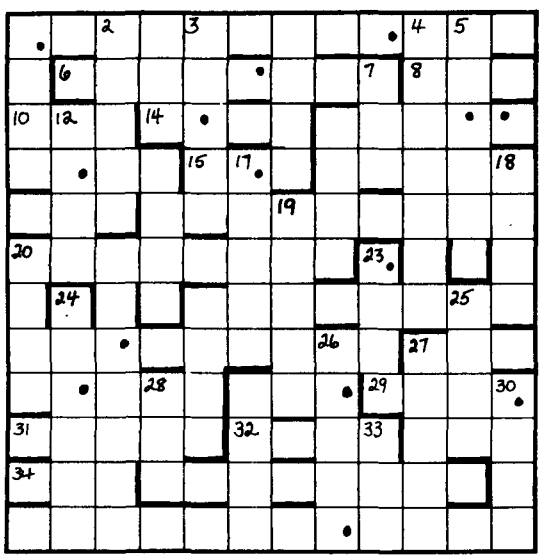
But must it be *yet*, Lord, must it be just yet? □

Alison Hennegan was literary editor of Gay News; *she now works for the Women's Press.*

Salamanca 79

'Lucky Jim'

PRIZES: £25 cheques for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 79, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 3 April.



Clues are in grid order though their numbering is necessarily displaced and, in some cases, non-existent, indicated by a dash. Unclued answers connected with a form of 27D are mostly more than one word (one spread over two areas, three over three) and their letters unchecked by clued answers are WHAT DOTTY FLOCKS'LD KEN. Solvers should number these where relevant (with more than one placing only the first needs the number), none being repeated, one optional choice being determined by those already used, and Partridge's Slang (vol2) while helping verify some answers gives a variation of the first across. Dotted squares reading down the columns provide an alternative to one unclued answer, and all clued words appear somewhere in Chambers, but purists might reasonably object to the combination at 4, for which my apologies.

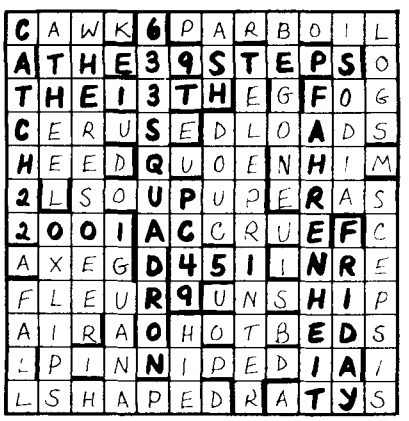
ACROSS

6 This part of snake goes with true wriggling (8)
8 Form of transport, not necessarily winged (3)
10 Preferred acquaintance, likely the tops (3)
14 Satellites having appearance round outer edge of Saturn (4)
15 Women in combat, say (3)
20 Is negligent with furniture stored away on board (8)
27 Some flipping insolence (3)
29 Plump and huge in extremes of sizes (4)
31 Indians once wearing skin mostly (5)
32 Let Scots flautists take regular parts (4). . .
34 . . .to increase their boundless likes perhaps (3)

DOWN

— Like a cue used in potting, _____, with weight on? (4)
2 Dread, say, to cut the deck? (5)
3 E.g. Indian, but not necessarily of India (5)
4 Fist is used to gain round? Supposing that to be the case (2,3,2). . .
5 . . .ambassadors have to cheat last third getting to the top (6)
7 Dwarflike? Look it up, you'll see blend of raw kid and _____ (3)
12 One on base turning up after unofficial leave? (4)
— They will not want to have the blues? (4)
17 Growing-up pains? This is one of them? (5)
18 Fairfax, for example? When he's no longer willing to participate (4)
19 Pope's sylph, advanced star, but heartless (5)
20 May be found among Nasik Hindus (4)
23 Takes advantage of public transport, but not the upper deck? (4)
24 Like e.g. 'Elsa', but not *that* name! (A long time hiding in den?) (6)
— Some of Jock's relatives? Indeed! (4)
25 While I'm stirring hard I'm making this initially (4)
26 Of ye ilk perhaps? (5)
28 Lord's privilege to process a case (internally) (3)
— One's in, having landed (4)
30 Saw one missing from press (4)
33 He took part in *spread* of rock'n'roll (3)

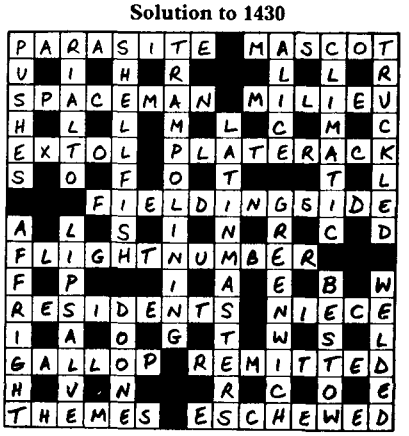
Solution to Salamanca 78



Prizewinners to Salamanca 78

C.T. Boam (Edinburgh)
F.E. Gersten (Liverpool)
Mrs J. Loutz (France)

Solution to 1430



Prizewinners to 1430

K. Boreham (Halstead, Essex)
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The Director of Manpower Services, Strathclyde Regional Council, Strathclyde House 2, 20 India Street, Glasgow

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LISTINGS

FRI 2 MARCH

TODMORDEN 'Save the NHS' Public Meeting 7.30pm Town Hall. Spkrs Max Madden MP, Barry Seal MEP. Org. COHSE.

SAT 3 MARCH

LONDON 'The Euro-elections — a key step to recovery'. Spkrs Robin Cook MP, A. Lomas, MP. Fabian Society Fringe meeting, 12.30pm basement study room, Camden Town Hall, NW1. **Details: 01-222 8877.**

LONDON Campaign against the Arms Trade National Meeting. 10.30am Pax Christi Centre, Pottery Lane, W11. **Details: CAAT 01-278 1976.**

LONDON 'End British Collaboration with Apartheid!' Joint City AA/Hackney AA Picket of Barclays Bank Dalston Junction, Kingsland High Rd. 10am-12 noon followed by street meeting in Ridley Rd Market 12-1pm. **Org City of London Anti-Apartheid Grp 01-837 6050.**

LONDON Unemployment Advice Conf/workshop 10.30am-4pm Old Library, 16 Knight's Hill, West Norwood, SE27. Creche/free tea, coffee, lunch for unemployed/unwaged. **Org WNEA, c/o Co-op Hall, Norwood Rd, SE27.**

EDINBURGH Lothians Oppose Social Security Cuts Public meeting 2pm 'Crosswinds'. **Details: LOSS, C/O Unemployed Workers Centre, 12A Picardy Pl 031-557 0718/228 6680.**

MON 5 MARCH

LONDON 'Women in Nicaragua' Spkr Magda Enriques, Nicaraguan Women's Assoc. Rep. on Council of State, 8pm, Council Chamber, County Hall, SE1. Followed by London Premiere of film by Tercer Cine 'Women in Nicaragua'. Women only. **Details: Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, 20-21 Compton Terr, N1. 01-359 8982.**

LONDON 1984 Jose Marti International Work Brigade to Cuba introductory meeting 7.30pm County Hall, SE1. **Details: Britain-Cuba Resource Centre (Brigade), c/o 119 Burton Rd, SW9.**

LONDON 'Feminism in the 1920s & 30s. 7.30pm Upstairs 'The Plough', Museum St, WC1. Spkr Sally Alexander. **Org. History Workshop.**

TUES 6 MARCH

LONDON Afia Begum Campaign celebrates International Women's Day at new Tower Hamlets Centre, specialising in women's immigration problems. 12.30, 114a Brick Lane, E1. **Details: Sharmila/Zaro 01-274 2820/247 7848.**

LONDON 'Civil Defence for Waltham Forest?' Public Meeting 7.30pm Leyton Assembly Hall, Municipal Offices, High Road, Leyton, E10.

FRI 9 MARCH

LONDON 'No first use & the right to self-defence' Spkr Dr J. Goldblat, SIPRI. Adm. free 7.30pm, Rm 143, County Hall. **Org Lawyers for Nuclear Disarmament 01-202 7392.**

IRELAND 1984 International Women's Day delegation to Armagh Prison, N. Ireland (return Mon. 12 Mar). Picket prison 11 Mar. Approx. cost £45. Accommo. provided in Belfast. **Details: London Armagh Co-ord. Grp, 374 Gray's Inn Rd, WC1. Maggie: 01-289 3878 (day).**

SAT 10 MARCH

LONDON 'End British Collaboration with Apartheid — a call to action!' Films, discns, workshops. Spkrs incl: ANC, SWAPO, Ken Livingstone. 11-5pm Adelaide Centre, 12 Adelaide St, WC2. Lunch/creche. **Org City of London Anti-Apartheid Grp 01-837 6050.**

LONDON 'Poverty in Europe' Fabian Society Conf. Director: Peter Townsend. Camden Town Hall, Euston Rd, NW1. **Details: 01-222 8877.**

HASTINGS 'Robert Tressell's Message Today' Spkr Jack Jones CH. 3pm Falaise Hall. Adm. 60p/30p unwaged. **Org Hastings WEA.**

CLYDEBANK CND BLITZ Commemoration March. Assemble gates of Dalmiur Park 12 noon to march to Clydebank shopping centre. Rally spkrs Joan Ruddock, Norman Buchan MP, Ron Todd, TGWU. **Details: Liz Cochrane, SCND 041 339 9390 eves./041-445 2822 day. John Morgan, Clydebank CND 37 73925.**

OXFORD 'PATRIOTISM' — 2-day National Workshop on Ideology and myth in the making of English National Identity. **Tickets £5/£3 unwaged and details: s.a.e. to History Workshop, Centre for Social History, Ruskin College, Oxford.**

FORTHCOMING

12 MAR LONDON Picket Home Office Prison Dept, 89 Eccleston Sq, SW1. 12-2pm. **Org S. London Irish Solidarity Comm. Box 1320, WC1N 3XX.**

12 MAR LONDON 'Shot down by the media: the fate of the Greenham Common women', discn led by Helen John, 7pm Prince Albert, 37 Wharfdale Rd, N1. **Org Journalists Against Nuclear Extermination. 01-278 7916.**

13 MAR RICHMOND 'Orwell and the Future of British Socialism'. Spkr Prof. Bernard Crick. 8pm Richmond Labour Party, 57 Church Rd. **Details: 01-940 6307.**

14 MAR LONDON 'Right of Repatriation for Irish PoWs' Public Meeting 7.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. Adm. 40p. **Org. S. London Irish Solidarity Campaign, Box 1320, WC1N 3XX.**

17 MAR LONDON Demo in support of Irish PoWs, 1pm Whittington Pk, Holloway Rd. **Org S. London Irish Solidarity Comm.**

17 MAR LONDON Doctors for a Women's Choice on Abortion Open Meeting, 10am Small Hall, Camden Centre, Bidborough St, WC1.

17 MAR CARDIFF 'An Ageing Society: Challenge for Social Services'. 10am-5.30pm University College, Cardiff, Centenary Conference. Fee: £10 incl. lunch. **Details: Ms Pat Harris, Dept. of Social Admin, University College, PO Box 78, Cardiff CF1 1XL.**

17 MARCH SANDWELL Midlands Peoples Campaign for Jobs festival. **Details: Sandwell Unemployed People's Centre, 324 High St, W. Bromwich 021-525 5275.**

18 MARCH LONDON Dance & Music Benefit for Chile Comm. for Human Rights. 7.30pm Sadler's Wells Theatre. **01-837 7561.**

18-25 MARCH LANCASTER Literary Festival, including Women's Day. **Further details from the Festival Office, 69 Church Street, Lancaster LA1 1ET. Phone 0524-62166.**

19 MARCH OXFORD 'The World After Nuclear War' one-day conf. Randolph Hotel. Norman Myers reporting on Washington Conference last Nov. £15. **Details & bkngs: Rm. 1209 Surrey House, Throwley Way, Sutton, Surrey SV11 4QQ.**

19 MARCH DARTINGTON Talk by Dr Mike Downham & Keith Pattison on Medical Campaign against Nuclear Weapons visit to USSR. 7pm Dartington Arts Centre. **Details: 0325 483271.**

24 MARCH PORTSMOUTH 'Peace Movement & Eastern Europe' day conf. with E.P. Thompson (END) Zdena Tomin (Charter 77), Danielle Grunberg (Moscow Peace Grp). £4/£1 unwaged. **Details: G. Austin, c/o Students Unions END Museum Rd, 0705 669159.**

24 MARCH LICHFIELD Day Conf. 'Psychological stress of nuclear age' Friary Grange, creche. **Contact Dr Hazel Baker, Rockville, Cherry Orchard, Lichfield, Staffs.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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GROUPS/ MEETINGS

CRITICAL LEGAL Studies. Third Conference of European Conference of Critical Legal Studies 'Grass Roots Movements and the Law'. University of Kent 13-15 April 1984. Details: Peter Fitzpatrick, Darwin College, University, Canterbury CT2 7NY. 0227 710554.

GAY SOCIALIST? Isolated from others like you? Icebreakers is a group of socialist gay men, committed to progressive sexual politics and offering support and friendship to others like them, through meetings and our helpline. Ring us on 01-274 9590, Monday to Friday 7.30-10.30 p.m.

LAURIESTON HALL, Castle Douglas, SW Scotland, Summer Event Sheet send s.a.e. Newsletter also ready send £1.00 two year subscription.

POLICE & RACISM Meeting at Regional Conference of London Labour Party, 1 p.m. Camden Town Hall, Sat. 3 March with P. Boateng, A. Dubbs. Chair: K. Vaz. LABOUR PARTY RACE ACTION GROUP.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public Talk Sunday 4 March 8 p.m. 'Cyclic Pattern of Life'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

European Nuclear Disarmament & Reading Centre for Italian Studies
Day School:
THE ITALIAN PEACE MOVEMENT
Sat. 10 March 11am-5pm
Faculty of Letters, University of Reading
Further information from: Paul Corner, Centre for Italian Studies, University of Reading, Reading RG6 2AA.
Tel: 0734 875123

German Historical Institute, London
Tuesday 6 March 5 p.m.
Prof. Dr Heinz Duchardt (Mainz)
Empire, Emperor and Imperial Authority in 17th and 18th Century Europe
17 Bloomsbury Square London WC1A 2LP
01-404 5486
Tea from 4.30pm
Seminar starts 5pm

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EVENTS

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A WELL-TRAVELLED fellow who's fond of book-worms buxom or blonde, seeks same for the pleasure of company together, and hopes that to this you'll respond. Box 7733.

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ATTRACTIVE, EARLY 30s, graduate, varied interests, seeks man, graduate, 35-45, for friendship/marriage, and share the pleasures of life. Preferably London area. Box 7755.

ARE YOU a lively minded individual, 18-80, enjoying the arts, discussions, conferences, rambles, dancing? The Progressive League caters for Mind, Body and intellectual Stimulus. And it's so cheap. Ring 01-452 8358.

ATTRACTIVE LADY, 37, interests include: outdoor life, theatre, current affairs, music, seeks attractive, warm, loving professional man, to share same. Photo appreciated. North East. Box 7775.

ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL man (58), divorced, loves arts, seeks attractive, intelligent, sensual, non-smoking woman, slim-medium, any race/circumstances, for warm friendship/enjoyments, preferably London/surrounding areas. Box 7582.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN (48), London, would like ditto man to go to Monteverdi and Bach concerts with, and to hear the Chilingarian, the Lindsay and the Amadeus. Box 7743.

BERKSHIRE MALE, 29, would like company of pleasant, leftish girl for jazz concerts, theatre, movies in London. Platonic basis — look no hands! Box 7764.

BISEXUAL MALE, 29, student, Glasgow, seeks companionship. Interests: bibliography, rock, gallery art, wildlife, ontology. Age/place/sex not as important as mutual interests. Box 7774.

CRETE 1983. Unforgettable girl, dark hair streaked silver grey, walking Samaria Gorge Sunday 19 June wearing multi-coloured spotted bikini, yellow safari shirt/shorts, carrying blue Adidas bag, contact Box 7730.

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating, Dept. (NT), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-938 1011.

DIVORCEE, late 40s, 2 teenage daughters, optimistic, affectionate, good humoured, well-travelled, life-loving, seeks tall, professional gentleman, similar nature, wide range of interests, nr London. Box 7748.

EASTER SKIING? Male academic (42), seeks bright female partner, for possible parallel perfection. Box 7769.

FED UP, fortyish, female and feminine? Tall, professional and understanding male, offers friendship and other fringe benefits. Photo helpful. Bristol. Box 7771.

FEMALE CO-DRIVER required, for well-maintained convertible STAG, red interior, registered on Continent 1928, now garaged in Bayswater, many extras including stereo, ski-rack, town and country tyres. Box 7727.

FEMALE DIVORCEE, 40, artistic and zany but sane, is fully enjoying her four children, yet lacks intelligent male company. Lives Cambridge. Box 7740.

FEMALE LOVER, 33, of music, literature, cinema, theatre, travel and socialism, seeks an attractive, intelligent, witty male to share it all with (London based). Box 7736.

FEMALE 23, without money, house, car or man. Content without first three, lonely without latter. Seeks relaxed, unambitious, scruffy lefty 20-30 o.n.o. Yorkshire or Midlands. Box 7744.

FEMININE, VERY youthful 50, professional/business woman, slim and fashionable, politically left of centre, considerate, seeks rebuild life with personable, tall, cultured and caring, professional man, fifties. Box 7746.

GAY GUY, 22, socialist, romantic, would like to meet similar, sincere young guys (over 21), for friendship. Photo please. Box 7756.

***HAVE CAR** will travel. Sprightly, 40-ish lady,* without husband, shoulder-high children, sought by 50-ish gent. No Newman or Redford but presentable. Phone number will do. Box 7726.

KIND, FRIENDLY middle-aged woman, fond of children and gets on with them, would like to babysit, maybe once a week, on a long-term basis. Small children, not yet into pop music, preferred. Box 7742.

GENUINE FRIENDSHIP? Divorced arts lecturer, ex-public school, moving in top circles, kind, worldly, out-going, idealistic, tall, member SDP. Would lady, 30ish, feminine, *similar background, valuing friendship, please* correspond, view meeting? (London) Box 7408.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE: graduate, 48, seeks lively-minded, active companion, who enjoys the arts, perhaps walking, gardens? (Regrets her varied interests exclude younger and married men). Box 7754.

LADY, ATTRACTIVE, sincere, interested Indian culture, language, music, seeks Asian gentleman 40-50ish, view mutual friendship. Photo appreciated. Box 7750.

LONELY DOCTOR, 35-50ish male, sought by slim, attractive, fun-loving, young woman colleague, to share work concerns, good times, music, arts, countryside, friendship/marriage. Box 7767.

LONELY LEFT-WING professional, early thirties, exiled in Birmingham, seeks progressive/feminist girlfriend, with an idea of getting it together and enjoying living. Box 7737.

MALE ACADEMIC (42), seeks stimulating, adaptable woman (30-50), to share hedonistic sabbatical. If you must work between holidays, I'll be houseboy. Box 7770.

MALE, SINGLE, early 30s, left wing, doctorate, writer, living in London, seeks non-racist, female over 20. Interests: theatre, cinema, music, travel, literature. Box 7765.

MALE, 29, interested in cinema, sport, contemporary music, left politics, travel, seeks similar, humorous, non-smoking, unfeminine woman. Age, race, looks unimportant. London/Essex. Box 7751.

MID-SUSSEX: eternally romantic, attractive, slim lady (40), enjoys music, opera, theatre and the countryside; seeks intelligent, reasonably sane, caring man with similar interests, aged between 40-55 years. Box 7766.

NOW RETIRED, I have time, at long last, to write the countless stories I need to about: Love and Infidelity in the heart of Texas: Life and Death in the Kibbutz: Rebellion and Retribution in the Republic: Cousin Leo, Brother Porky and Ancient Mama: and much, much more. To succeed in all this, I would be much helped by the thoughtful companionship and sensitive response of a perceptive and imaginative woman (aged perhaps 30-50), she shall have, unconditionally, the greater part of any rewards forthcoming if she will help me achieve the peace and excitement of creative writing, in an atmosphere of mutual affection and fulfilment, in quiet surroundings in West London. Box 7735.

OCCASIONAL MAN wanted by unattached woman with normal passions, 35-45, sense of fun, thoughtful, practical, independent, emotionally expressive, honest, imperfect. Mutual diversion, affection and friendship hoped for. Photo (small) please. London. Box 7741

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PROFESSIONAL ASIAN male, late twenties, frequently visits England (London), affectionate, humorous etc., seeks warm, intelligent lady (age/looks unimportant), for friendship and fun. ALA. Box 7747.

RETIRED, ACADEMIC, sixties, peace-loving feminist, wishes befriend someone to encourage her in an independent life-style, and share some interests. Correspond first. Genuine. Box 7759.

SCARLETT WOMAN needs RHETT MAN. BELLE, 39, striking, feminine, stylish, demure exterior, gypsy soul, loves music, ballet, opera, the arts, seeks dashing, manly BEAU with easy going, well groomed style. Cultured, sweet natured, chivalrous. Box 7745.

SOCIALIST MALE, 19, unemployed, but busy, smokes and drinks, seeks independent-minded woman, for intellectual and sexual relationship. Midlands. Box 7773.

TWO HAPPY, bright, cheerful, but serious-minded females, 23, W. Yorks, desire interesting friends anywhere. Interests include: music, dancing, talking, reading and drinking. Box 7768.

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UNIVERSITY LECTURER, 30, PhD, with Oxbridge background, needs a lady, likes classical music, travel, easy going disposition, *purpose serious relationship perhaps marriage.* Box 7697.

W. LONDON. Small, friendly lady, emerging hibernation, needs emphatic, lively male company, 48+, unattached, enjoying music, theatre, parks and pubs, appreciating absurd, still learning. Box 7729.

WOMAN, TALL, dark, single, early 50s, sense of humour, non-smoker, moderate left-wing, interested books, theatre, film, art, discussion, walking, food, travel, writing. East Midlands; visits Oxford, London. Seeks considerate, lively, unattached man for friendship, walking, talking, possible travel. Photograph appreciated. Box 7749.

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